

**SERVING YOUR PLAYSTATION NEEDS SINCE 1995**

Volume 3 • Issue 9 • August 1998

# PS *Extreme*

THE PLAYER'S UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLAYSTATION

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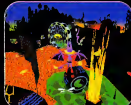
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zany bosses and all kinds of surreal spaces. (Better watch your back.)



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**JERSEY  
DEVIL**

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# JUST LIKE THE EXCEPT FOR



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**News:** p16  
ASC unveils Fall lineup in the Motor City. Who will play Lara Croft? PlayStation overtakes the N64/Win. Popgnosis co-founder hits the road.

**Execute:** p20  
If you ask nicely, we'll give you some codes.

**Accessory:** p24  
Get ready for the ASCII Sphere 360™ — it's coming.

**Exclusive:** p26  
Check out first-looks on Activision's Fifth Element, Eidos' Tomb Raider III and Fox Interactive's Crazed II — we got 'em!

**Script:** p34  
A brief and semi-informative chat with Seth Gerson, producer of Activision's upcoming Asteroids revival.

**Xtreme:** p36  
Super Action Fighting Game—!!

**Expecting:** p42  
More previews than we could stuff in a bag, including: Syphon Filter, Wild 5, Moto Racer 2, Madden NFL 99 and more...

**Rated:** p54  
After all of the controversy, we've removed the pens. Now you can say you read the magazine "just for the articles" and mean it!

**Export:** p78  
Square's Action/RPG Soujiki comes to life — only in Japan!

Now that E3 has come and gone, most developers have returned to the business of finishing up the games they were exhibiting at the show. While there is a bit of a lull that has fallen over the video game industry, it's only the typical "quiet before the storm." The 3rd and 4th Quarters this year will be host to an unbelievable amount of new PlayStation games, pushing the current library to well over 600 titles that will be available to consumers by Christmas. While this is sure to put a smile on game-hungry kids (and adults) worldwide, a lot of video game publishers and developers have been grumbling a bit, with the complaint that it's becoming increasingly tougher and tougher to show a profit off of their PlayStation products. Their reasoning: because their product isn't getting noticed or selling that well with so many PS titles out there — it's only the Tomb Raiders, Resident Evils, Crash Bandicoots and Tekkens that bring in the big numbers. Sure, we agree that sometimes it's hard to be seen when you're in the middle of a crowd, but instead of blaming others for allowing so many games to be pumped through the pipeline, perhaps they should take a look at what they're peddling. There is a reason games such as the aforementioned titles sell so well... because they excel in just about every aspect. I feel it should be up to the publishers and developers to monitor their own titles and not release sub-par products. They should strive to make every game a unique and exciting experience, instead of slapping on a movie license or producing a shoddy clone of an already-popular title. If anything, a competitive market such as this should cause the creative juices to start flowing and make developers go the extra mile to deliver something truly memorable — and bankable.

Now that I've come down off my soapbox, here's the lowdown on the issue in your hands: For starters, we've got the cover feature on Eidos' Ninja. If you've been playing games for as long as we have, you'll dig the classic gaming elements combined with Core's 3D technology. Moving on, we've focused our Exclusive sights this month on Tomb Raider III, Fifth Element and Crazed II. In addition, there's plenty of previews and reviews, including Syphon Filter and Colony Wars: Vengeance (previewed) and NFL Xtreme, Turbo Prop Racing and MK4 (reviewed).

As always, I hope you enjoy the issue, and we'll see you in thirty.

G R E G  
OFF@QUAKE.NET



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DIMENSION PUBLISHING, INC. PRESENTS

# PS Extreme

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*Lightning never strikes  
the same place twice.  
Unless, of course,  
you work on your aim.*



*From the creators of Tomb Raider and Fighting Force.*

*Remember, practice makes perfect. Especially when it comes to assassinating evil-as enemies and flying through 10 levels of murderous traps and pitfalls. Lucky for you, Ninjahead comes equipped with an arsenal of weapons, magic and moves capable of inflicting the most unimaginable of horrors. Because in this ancient Japanese quest, the task set before you is more survival*



Dear PSExtreme,

I love your mag, I tried to read this one mag...it was Voodoo or something and I thought it sucked.

Anyway, I think it's great that Tomb Raider joined the Greatest Hits. I bought the game and I just love it. Could you please help on a level? It's called Natla's Mines, level 13.

I don't know if I'm weird or something but, I didn't care for GEX: ETC. Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown was a fantastic game. Why did you give it a low rating? I know it's got something to do with the graphics. I don't think the graphics were that bad.

I think Zach does the best reviews, because of Breath of Fire III.

Please don't reply with just a sentence, write a lot of information for me.

Thanks,  
Derek Thompson

*Ohhh boy, you've gone and done it now! No way you're getting tips from us, bub. We publish Voodoo! It does not suck! No info for you... Next!*

Dear EXmail,

In response to your response to Michael of Albany, NY, (Jun '98) I'd like a job since I am an inexperienced high school dropout. Plus my Grandma has a typewriter. Please hire me.

Luke Ellison  
Toledo, OH

*Darn, you just missed the last three openings we had. (Everybody give a warm welcome to our freshest high school dropout writers, Ben, Scott and Miaka.)*

Dear PSExtreme,

I would first like to start off saying that you're my favorite mag and that you absolutely KILL the other videogame magazines. I'm here today

to ask a short but interesting question. With all the 3rd installments of many games (Twisted Metal 3, Tomb Raider 3, Crash 3,) would there happen to be a Jet Moto 3 in the the process??? I LOVE the Jet Moto series, and would love to see a 3rd. I know this will never get printed, but its worth a shot.

Jet Moto Junkie

*You must have some sort of telepathic powers. While it's not officially confirmed, we've heard rumblings that Jet Moto 3 is already way into production from a new developer (not SingleTrac). In addition, don't be surprised if you see a new "enhanced version" of Jet Moto 2 sometime soon.*

Dear PSExtreme,

I have a great idea for a game. A: What could I do with it? And B: how could I protect it?

Tim McCoy

P.S. love the mag.

*A: Learn how to program. B: Don't tell anyone.*

Dear PSExtreme,

One question. In Tekken 3, I've heard that if you play arcade mode 1001 times, during the 1001st time you'll hear a character select sound during a fight. Then when you select a character and go off the far screen you should see a blank picture with the name Kazuya. If you select it they say place Tekken 2 CD in, then Tekken 3 again. Tell me, is this a rumor or is it true? They also say after you've done every possible thing in the game you should fight DEVIL JIN (I've also heard it's impossible to beat him). Is that true too?

Chris Humphrey

P.S. I might send in questions to my other 24 games.

*Ouch. Another victim falls prey to malicious rumors spread by the competition... What are they doing to our youths? Please, hurry, fellow gamers. Unite against this injustice, by sending us your \$21.95 so that we may continue to fight against the evil enemy and forever put an end to their heinous ne'-do-gooding before it's too late.*

Dear PSExtreme,

My PlayStation is screwed up. Yesterday I brought it up to my family's cabin in California. Me and my friend hooked it up. Most of our games we brought up went haywire! The screen on the game appears to "bounce" from bottom to top, what should I do? Please help!

Thanks,  
Mr. X of the MLB

*Good news, X. Your PlayStation is fine. Some older televisions will do that. All should be right with the world, once again, when you return to your home.*

Dear PSExtreme:

I would like to say that you have an outstanding magazine. I have been reading gaming mag's for most of my life and I just discovered yours in January 1998. I have a problem though. I'm 13 year old male and I have played a PlayStation only once (I don't have one of my own). I know this sounds funny to you because you are a single platform gaming mag, but I just discovered why I buy your mag. Here goes, I want a PlayStation so much that I buy mags so I can read and look at graphics of games that I find interesting. I ask this of you: Would you be so kind as to send me a free PlayStation? Pleaaaaaaase, I swear to you I'm not telling you a lie. See, my parents won't buy me one, and I'm too young to get a job. So I ask this rather big favor of you guys. I will do whatever you ask of me.

EXMAIL

# What are you waiting for?

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**CORE**

**EIDOS**  
INTERACTIVE

Finally I would like to ask you how I could get the job that you guys are blessed with when I grow older. Well, thanks for your time.

Sincerely,  
Chris Walker

*You'll do anything we ask?? Don't be making promises you can't keep now, little buddy. What if we asked you to... ummmmm... give yourself an Atomic Wedgie and run around school at lunch, screaming "I have wet my shorts and my butt is on fire!"? (Of course, you'd need to have a friend video tape the event and send it to us for proof).*

*As far as getting jobs like ours... not likely. Nobody gets hired doing what we do, you have to make your own job. Start your own company. Just don't try to compete with us.*

Dear PSExtreme,

Here we go again. I'm still reading all this stuff about PlayStation 2 again. It seems the "other" magazines can't help themselves and continue to spread rumors. Hopefully, you will be able to shed some TRUTH on the subject. What's the story? The last thing I need is to buy more hardware!

Sincerely,  
Alex  
Groton, CT

*The truth is that there is no truth. Nothing about the "PlayStation 2" has been finalized. It can't be. Sony is nowhere near ready to come out with another system. The PlayStation is the most popular video game system on Earth, right now. We are living in the golden age and we'd be smarter to enjoy it than to worry about what will come next. As far as all the specs you've read about the PS2 in other mags, it's all self-serving bunk. Technology moves at such a rapid pace that it's impossible to finalize anything when a launch is so far off.*

Dear PSExtreme,

I have really enjoyed the retro games that have been released, but failed to find one of my favorites — Space Invaders. Any word of a release or expected release date?

Thank you,  
Tom Gabauer

*Sadly, no word, sorry. The last remake of Space Invaders was for the TurboGrafx (or was it the SNES?). It'd be great to see someone take the Space Invaders gameplay and use some creativity and imagination to come up with something really cool.*

Dear PSExtreme,

It seems as though the evil gods at Sega are preparing to coerce us into throwing away our hard earned dollars once again! (32x, Sega CD, Saturn...) Have you guys seen Dreamcast (What genius came up with the name?), and what do you think? Is this going to be another big, klunky, underpowered black box, or has Sega finally turned over a new leaf and made something sleek, powerfull and inexpensive?? Is Sony worried?

Stoh Alred,  
Miami, FL

*Yes, as a matter of fact. Using our vast network of industry insiders, we've manage to get our hands on a Katana (old name) development system. While there are certainly some nice features, there's nothing here that'll be a PlayStation killer. Besides, having the best system doesn't mean squat if you can't get the best games out of it. Look at NEC with the TG-16. Kicked the NES's booty hardware-wise. Still flopped. Look at Atari with the Lynx and Sega with the GameGear. Years ahead of the GameBoy. Holy hairy humanoids! They had color and they still got creamed by the GameBoy!*

Dear PSExtreme,

In your April 98 issue, you gave the ASCII Grip controller a Silver rating, saying, "I wouldn't recommend using the Grip for action or fighting games", but one of the prizes for the best code was "The Grip". Is that two-faced or am I over-reacting?

Other than that, you guys do a knock-up job. Now for the most important questions known to man. Are you ready?

1. Could you do a SouthPark game exclusive?
  2. How come the sky is blue?
  3. Do my teachers have a conspiracy going on about me?
- That's enough head-biting from me.

Derek Cerna

P.S. Why did you have to diss Punky Skunk like that? I thought it was very original and offered many hours of fine gaming.

*Derek, you nutty, nutty boy. You're so nutty! We love that!*

*ASCII sponsors our code section. That means they give us the prizes to give away and we put their logo in the section. Our rating of the Grip just proves that we won't be kissing ASCII's butt just for sponsoring our section. On to the questions.*

1. For you, anything. Check back in the next few issues.
2. It's something the Chickens handle. We don't ask questions.
3. If they're actually teaching you stuff, then yes, it's likely that they're conspiring to get you out of their school and into somebody else's, via graduation. Otherwise, they like you and want to keep you.

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# PlayStation Gaming News

## ASC READIES NEW PRODUCTS FOR Q4

Opting to pass on the 120 decibel hustle and bustle of E3, ASC unveiled two of their upcoming Fourth Quarter products during a special press event in Detroit this past June. ASC is working with young ace NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon on a new game, entitled (eloquently enough) "Jeff Gordon Racing."

Instead of cresting yet another PSX NASCAR racer, JGR is a high speed futurist racer with passing similarities to Wipeout XL and Gran Turismo. In order to whip the jaded and blasé video game media into the resemblance of a frenzy for the new game, ASC kindly treated a core group of self-important VIPs (most notably PS Extreme) to luxury



skybox accommodations, for the big ol' NASCAR Winston Cup 400, in which Gordon took third place. Gordon also gave a lively intro for the game, revealing himself to be quite the long-time gamer (dropping references to Intellivision and Atari classics), as well as telling the assembled crowd that his only demand while on the road is that his PlayStation be hooked up for easy access in his trailer.

ASC also had a private dinner in a very public microbrewery, where the company gave us a hands on demo of developer Player One's new Twisted Metal-meets-Wave Race 64 combat game, "Dead in the Water." We spent the evening jettisoning around and shooting up other players in this cool new title, while munching on excellent eats and watching the Stanley Cup champion Detroit Red Wings best up the Washington Capitals on the restaurant's big screen. While ASC provided an entertaining weekend, PS Extreme feels that it's a safe bet the company will never fly with the incredibly inept Northwest Airlines again...



Dead in the Water

## SONY SAYS PLAYSTATION BIGGEST SELLING PRODUCT IN COMPANY HISTORY

When we gave you the wrap-up of Sony Computer Entertainment's E3 press conference last issue, we neglected to highlight one small, but very interesting, factoid that the company let fly during the presentation. It seems that the PlayStation has become the most successful single product in Sony history. The \$44 billion electronics powerhouse has never had a solitary product sell in the quantity, or at the rate, of the PlayStation. While Sony is obviously best known for their many consumer products (TVs, Walkmans, CD players, etc.), the PSX is essentially the same product that the company first began selling Japan in December of 1994. SCEA currently estimates that one out of every ten homes in the United States is powered by PlayStation. In the words of Kaz Hirai, SCEA's COO, "We sell entertainment, not technology," and it seems to be working, as pop culture PlayStation references are springing up with increasing frequency in TV, movies and music.

## WHO IS LARA CROFT?

Sharp-eyed visitors to Eidos' E3 booth may have noticed this poster hanging up over the company's reception area (if they were able to drag their peepers away from the seemingly endless vista of scantily clad women, that is). While the poster raises almost as many questions as it answers, it is proof positive that the Eidos/Universal project is going forward, with an ambiguous 1999 release date. In the meantime, speculation continues to run rampant through the internet as people with too much time on their hands proffer their views as to which



Hollywood starlet should be tapped for the lead role. Current fan faves include Sandra Bullock (from crappy Speed 2), Juliet Roberts (of countless stinkers), Elizabeth Hurley (Austin Powers) and the inevitable Gillian Anderson (X-Files) and Jerri Ryan (the sell-out sexy Borg on Star Trek: Voyager) nominations. Don't hold your breath while engaged in your one-handed typing, net perver; the Lara mantle will most likely end up being passed to talent more along the lines of Kylie Minogue — the perky Aussie popstar who played Cammy in Street Fighter: The Movie — or Mortal Kombat: Annihilation star Sandra Hess.

## PSYGNOSIS CEO BAILS

Ian Hetherington, CEO and co-founder of Psygnosis, left the company in June, supposedly due to political infighting between the UK software house and their US owner, Sony Computer Entertainment. English trade magazine Computer Trade Week — CTW, as it's known to its legions of industry insiders — reports that Hetherington and Sony "failed to see eye-to-eye on how the autonomous and multi-format Psygnosis should be taken forward." It turns out that the PlayStation-owned Psygnosis still had the rights and the abilities to turn out products for other video game systems, including the Nintendo 64. Needless to say, SCEA was less than pleased to find its only second party developer suddenly declaring interest in the competition's systems. While this won't have much of an effect on gamers, PS Extreme offers Mr. Hetherington a fond farewell, and the hopes that he returns soon to the interactive entertainment field.

PS

# PSX NEWS



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# PlayStation Gaming News

## From Around The Globe

### TOP 10 BEST SELLING PLAYSTATION TITLES RANKED ON UNIT SALES MAY, 1998

<b>1</b> last month 1	<b>2</b> last month 1	<b>3</b> last month 2	<b>4</b> last month 3	<b>5</b> last month 9
				
<b>Tekken 3</b> Namco average retail price \$45	<b>Gran Turismo</b> Sony average retail price \$41	<b>Need for Speed III</b> EA average retail price \$42	<b>Triple Play 99</b> EA average retail price \$42	<b>MLB 99</b> Sony average retail price \$41
				
<b>6</b> last month 4	<b>7</b> last month 2	<b>8</b> last month 5	<b>9</b> last month 7	<b>10</b> last month 6
				
<b>Tomb Raider</b> Eidos average retail price \$20	<b>Breath of Fire III</b> Capcom average retail price \$44	<b>Resident Evil 2</b> Capcom average retail price \$50	<b>Crash Bandicoot</b> Sony average retail price \$21	<b>WCW Nitro</b> THQ average retail price \$42
				

Sources: NPD TRSIS Video Games Tracking Service • 9,100 outlets across the U.S.  
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\*\* Not in Top 10 Last Month

# EX NEWS

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Join an epic 2-player struggle where only the fittest survive. Your objective? Utter annihilation. Your tactics? Outwit and outmaneuver your enemy. Then engage in fierce real-time 3D battles. The outcome? Absolute destruction.



# THE UNHOLY WAR



PC CD-ROM

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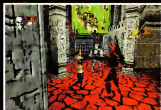


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## Deathtrap Dungeon



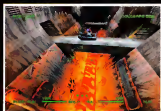
### TO SELECT STAGE:

At the main screen, press **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0**.  
**1 2** A sound will confirm the code. Go to load game, and there you will see the levels.

### INVISIBILITY:

At the game setup screen press **+, +, +, +, +, +, +, +**.  
 Code submitted by **Mr Rache**

## Forsaken



Enter these codes on the password screen:

- "BOURLES" - Realistic cheats
- "THESULLAMUNITY" - Turns on level switch capability, use menus to pick any level.
- "JAMERON" - God mode. Invulnerable, full weapons, unlimited ammo & nitro, 4 powerups, 8 unknown weapons "HERP" and "THERP" crystals
- "THERP" - If you have access to the special chip, turns on the "aditi" features.
- "JUMBERSACK" - This turns on a missile toggle. Hitting quick key for Mig selects normal, hit Mig again for spinning Mig, once more for bouncey-Mig. (2 bounces)
- Hitting quick key for Solaris selects normal, once more for homing plasma like the turrets use, once more for extra powerful blue homing plasma.
- "JIMSEAM" - This turns on the beam toggle. Hitting laser quick key selects normal laser, once more for electro-beam like Lev'chek, once more for superbeam from ladies.

## Oddworld: Abe's Oddysey

### GREEN GAS PART:

Hold **ESC** and push **+, +, +, +, +, +, +, +**

### LEVEL SELECT:

(At main menu) Hold **ESC** and push **+, +, +, +, +, +, +, +**

### MOVIE SELECT:

(At main menu) Hold **ESC** and push **+, +, +, +, +, +, +, +**

### VOICE CHEAT:

Hold **ESC** and push **0, +, +, +, +, +, +, +**. You can solve any voice puzzle with a single sound

Code submitted by **Darryl Terry**

## Theme Hospital

### LEVEL PASSWORDS:

Go to password menu and enter these codes to start your hospital on the selected level.

Level 2- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**  
 3- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**

4- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**  
 5- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**  
 6- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**  
 7- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**  
 8- **0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0**

## Gran Turismo



### EASY MONEY:

The easiest way to gain extra credits is to race and win each Cup or Challenge more than once, and then sell the extra Bonus Cars you receive.

### PASTROP CAR:

The R33 Skyline GTT V6Spec by Nissan is the fastest car in the game. Load it up with everything and you should get 941 horsepower!

### FREE PARTS:

It seems there is a bug in GT which means you can make free duplicate copies of any parts you buy for a particular type of car. Try this:

1. Buy two identical cars. Give them a different colour scheme if you like.
2. Buy loads of parts for the first one - fully spec it up if you like.
3. Check out its list of fitted parts from the garage (you should see a list of what you just bought).
4. Switch to the other car and get in it (the one which you haven't fitted any parts on yet) and check its fitted parts list (should be empty). & Sell in the second car go race (Spot Race will do).
5. When you get options to qualify go to Machine Setting, then Change Parts. You'll now find you can select all the parts from the other car (tyres, turbo, suspension, intercooler etc, in effect fully spec'ing up the second car. Run the race, and go back to the garage. Check out the list of fitted parts for both cars. The parts are now installed for both of them.
- NOTE: This won't work for the Weight Reduction or Racing MD options and a few other things (like part polishing), as these are not available from the Change Parts menu - they're not really "parts" as such anyway. Also, it doesn't seem to work with cars that have been won. Of course the best thing you can do with this is sell the extra cars. As if you cost nothing to increase its speed, you'll make a profit when you sell it!

### 10-ET MODE, BONUS GEMS AND BONUS TRACKS:

To get all the bonus items in Arcade mode, which include the five other tracks (Autumn Ring, Deep Forest, SS24, and Grand Valley Speedway) all the other ones (Cruze, Subaru, Dodge, and TTR), the ending movie, and 10 new GT Mode, you have to beat every single track with each type of car (A, B, and C) under all three modes of difficulty (Easy, Normal, Difficult)

### REPLAY MODE TIP:

Are you having trouble beating the license tests? Well, you won't anymore. Do to the replay theater in the main screen, and check out the demonstration movies. They will show you how to beat all the license tests!

### Win the Concept Car:

To get the Concept car, enter the American vs. British race and place first in the championship

## GAME SHARK Codes

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codes right here for your cheat's pleasure. Warning: These codes were tested without a Game Shark. For the latest codes and info, get on the internet and check [www.gameshark.com](http://www.gameshark.com), [gameplay.net](http://gameplay.net) or [www.state.as.us](http://www.state.as.us). If you find a code doesn't work, you may need to upgrade your Game Shark. Check your instruction manual for details. (Most of these codes are "unofficial" and may or may not work correctly at all. Use at your own risk.)

### BREATH OF FIRE III

5 MILLION TRENT .....00144F50 F01E  
 .....00144F52 02FA  
 TIME ALWAYS 00:00 .....00144F00 0000  
 HAVE ALL DRAGON GEMS.....00145546 FFFF  
 HAVE ALL DRAGON GEMS.....0014554A FFFF  
 MAX FIRE CASTING POWER.....001440BC 0100  
 TURN CAMP BUTTON INTO MAP TO LAST SAVE  
 POINT .....0014504A 0001  
 HAVE WOODEN ROD .....0014510E 201E  
 HAVE BAMBOO ROD .....0014511F 2F1E  
 HAVE DELUXE ROD .....001451F2 301E  
 HAVE ANGLING ROD .....001451F4 310E  
 HAVE SPANNER .....001451FE 321E  
 HAVE MASTER'S ROD .....001451FE 331E  
 NO RANDOM BAPTISM .....00145F22 0000  
 SELF ENGINE NEVER OVERHEATS.....00145E9A 0000  
 ELECTRIC GATE IN FRONT ENTRANCE OF  
 FACTORY TURNED OFF .....00144F52 3E10  
 INFINITE TITAN TIME .....00144370 1800  
 .....00144372 4E1E

### INFINITE HP

1ST CHARACTER .....00145F16 03E7  
 2ND CHARACTER .....00146056 03E7  
 3RD CHARACTER .....00146196 03E7  
 INFINITE HP  
 1ST CHARACTER .....00145F1A 03E7  
 2ND CHARACTER .....0014605A 03E7  
 3RD CHARACTER .....0014619A 03E7  
 THERE NO STATUS CHANGES  
 1ST CHARACTER .....00145F16 0000  
 2ND CHARACTER .....00146056 0000  
 3RD CHARACTER .....00146196 0000  
 COOL BOARDS 2  
 ALWAYS PLACE 1ST & INFINITE CHECKPOINT  
 TIME .....0005103C 0000  
 .....00130994 0001  
 HAVE 50.0 IN HALFLIFE & OPENAL ALIEN  
 HOARDER GRAY .....0009A86F 5555  
 .....0009A87C 5555  
 .....0009A882 5555  
 .....0009A880 5555  
 EXTRA BOARDS .....00057103 0007  
 ENABLE EXTRA CHARACTERS .....00057100 FFFF

GameShark codes lifted from [www.geocities.org](http://www.geocities.org)

Send all code submissions to:

### EXECUTE

Dimension Publishing

1176 Chess Drive, Suite E

Porter City, CA 94404

or email us at: [ds@quake.net](mailto:ds@quake.net)

A special thanks goes out to **Eli Riche** for sending in his bag'o'codes... ya didn't win this time buddy but keep'em coming!

**If you were ME**

**would you hang on  
for one more world title?**

**could you thread the needle  
with three guys trying to  
hack you down?**

**would you shoot more?**

**cut your hair?**



**CARLOS VALDERRAMA CAPT. COLOMBIAN NATIONAL TEAM**

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## ASCII SPHERE 360° — ASCIIWARE™ — N/A

Since the launch of the PlayStation back in September of '95, gamers have been confined to the bare-basic A.B.C.'s of controllers... that is, until now. Flash forward to 1998, where ASCIIWARE, a leading-edge developer of peripherals and software, is about to revolutionize the controller market with the introduction of their newest hardware addition — the ASCII Sphere 360°.

What's so special about this controller? Well, a whole lot actually. Right off the bat, you can tell, just by glancing at the Sphere, that it doesn't look like any PlayStation controller you've ever seen before. (For those familiar

with the PC, does the SpaceOrb ring a bell?). The Sphere features a ball sitting atop the controller that will allow players a full six degrees of freedom. What does that mean to you and me? Basically, instead of having to think D-pad left and U to circle/strafe around enemy, you just twist the ball left and pull it a little bit to the left — it's that easy. It definitely makes controlling a lot more intuitive. It helps to think of the ball as your head, where to walk forward you push forward, strafe left you push left, look up you twist it up, etc....

As for control, this unit simulates the analog mode and it will work with just about every game in your PlayStation library. It has nine different selectable modes where different button pushes have been configured to the ball. For example, if you are playing Tomb Raider, you can use a mode that has the U and R1 button applied to the ball — allowing you to use the sphere instead of hitting the buttons. It also has modes that simulate the MegCon and Sony's Dual Analog controller (not the Dual Shock).

In addition to configuring the Sphere to just about any PlayStation game you already own, new games have already been programmed and optimized for the new controller. This means that there will be more than a few titles that will have native support right out of the gate. Thus far, those titles are MDK and Forsaken, with future games including Midway's Stunt RC Copter and NFL Blitz.

As you can see, there will be a wide variety of titles that are able to support the Sphere, so it will not be one of those specialty controllers that you will get and then it sits on your shelf collecting dust. As the controller continues to gain support from such developers as Shiny, Acclaim and

Midway, there definitely looks to be a huge potential for this new controller. Even David

Perry, industry notable-quotable and President of Shiny Entertainment, has been quoted as saying, "The 'Ascii Sphere 360°' is a very important step in achieving total 3-Dimensional freedom."

Another thing that might stand out about the controller is its six button front

layout. It looks to have a great feel, with the L buttons located on the front of the pad — even 2-D games like Street Fighter may benefit from the Sphere. And, just in case the ball

isn't going to work for your game, you can always use the D-pad — seems like ASCII didn't leave out a thing in designing this controller.

At this point, our only concern with the Sphere may be the learning curve. It definitely isn't going to be something that you can just sit down and start kicking butt with. But, we have been assured that the unit will come with a demo disk to help gamers get the hang of using a 3D controller — clearly a good thing. Look for a full review in next month's PSExtreme.



# EXCESSORY



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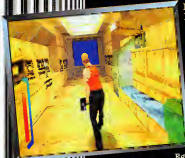
**ATLUS®**

# THE FIFTH ELEMENT

Who better to capture the spirit of French director Luc Besson's (The Professional, La Femme Nikita) "The Fifth Element" than top French video game developer, Kalisto. Activision has scooped up the US distribution rights to the PlayStation version of one of last summer's big sci-fi/action blockbusters, and will release the game in the Fall.

The Fifth Element is set in the 23rd Century, where an ancient evil is returning to destroy all life in the universe. The only way to stop the onslaught is by combining the four elements of life (earth, air, fire and water) with the mystical "fifth element" in a secret temple in the Egyptian desert. Human and alien agents of this mysterious entity conspire to snatch the stones and the Fifth Element before they can be safely returned to Earth, however, which leads the earth's military forces to conscript one of their top agents to recover the stones and save the day.

You take on the dual roles of Korben, ex-military officer currently driving a flying cab through futuristic Manhattan and Leeloo, a genetically perfect woman who turns out to be none other than the Fifth Element in the flesh. You can select from the two characters at the beginning of each level (sometimes you're forced to change midway through), depending on which character's particular strengths will come in more



# EXCLUSIVE



handy. Korben is a weapons expert, and is able to handle quite the armory of firearms, from a basic pistol to power-boosted guns and flame throwers. As the perfect human being, Leeloo is stronger than the average human, and relies on her agility and martial arts skills. Leeloo and Korben's adventures take them through sixteen different levels in four different worlds, from New York City to outer space, winding up in the Egyptian temple.

Kalisto is managing to get some more mileage out of the engine that they created for *Nightmare Creatures*, their creepy brawler set in Victorian era London (which received a 92% rating when reviewed in the December '97 issue of *PS Extreme*). Gameplay takes place from a third person, behind-the-back view as you navigate your way through the various 3D levels. The details on Korben and Leeloo's models are great; Kalisto has really managed to capture the actors' appearances (especially Willis' ever-spreading bald patch).

Both characters can run, jump and kick their way through the levels, as well as destroy objects like barrels and boxes to discover power-ups and other assorted items. Puzzles compliment the action as well, as you'll be expected to find your way through large areas, unlocking doors, turning off force fields and deactivating various computer stations.

And what would a movie licensed game be without some of the flick to back it up? Kalisto has managed to snag some snazzy clips from the film (sans Bruce Willis), doing an excellent compression job on the FMV clips. The Fifth Element has some of the nicest video we've seen in a PlayStation game. The movie's style is nicely reflected in the character and environment design, but it's much easier to see the influence of famous French comic book artist, Moebius and designer Jean Paul Gaultier in the video clips.

**CHRIS**



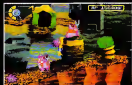
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**TOMBA!**

[www.playstation.com](http://www.playstation.com)

# TOMB RAIDER III



It seems that the video game consumer just can't get enough of Lara and Core and Eidos are more than happy to satisfy our thirst with the third installment in the series, scheduled for release this November. While not much is known about the story behind TR3, I was able to play a one level demo that was displayed at E3 (a level that the development team isn't even sure will make it into the final game) and get a bit of hands-on time with it, so we can give you a little taste of things to come. TR3 is built around a brand

new game engine that displays the action in 512 x 240 resolution, with even more detailed characters and environments. This new engine also allows for special effects that include rippling water and unique environmental lighting effects. Lara will also have a few new moves, including the ability to move hand over hand across the bottoms of bridges and walkways and a forward and backward

roll that can get Ms. Croft through tight quarters. Eidos has told us that Core is working on beefing-up the enemy AI and in introducing adventurers into some new exotic locales. While there is certainly a lot more work to be accomplished in TR3, the early demo is proof enough that the new game engine is up to the task of taking Lara to the next technological level and that Core isn't quite through with wringing everything out of the PlayStation hardware. We will keep you updated with all of the latest and greatest, as it becomes available.

Dave



# EXCLUSIVE

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# Croc II



I can remember the small tinges of jealousy I felt back when Mario 64 first debuted with the Nintendo 64. At that point in time, the PlayStation was seriously lacking in the action/platform category. While we had amazing games like Crash Bandicoot, Jumping Flash and Tomb Raider, there wasn't a whole lot available in the free roaming, irrepressibly cute, character-based 3D action category. Thankfully, all that has changed — in spades — and it's due, in part, to a group of talented developers in the UK by the name of Argonaut Software Ltd., along with publishers, Fox Interactive, and their eager repetition orthon by the name of Croc. The original Croc: Legend of the Gobboos, released last year, was a big success for Fox, selling more than 800,000 units worldwide. The game proved that the PlayStation could do go anywhere 3D.

While admittedly, the game was faulted do to its tiny environments and constant loading, it gave me personal satisfaction knowing that the technical possibilities of the PlayStation were limitless when left to the imaginations and intuitiveness of the right developers.

Well, here we are, a generation later, and Argonaut is already hard at work on the sequel, which promises to take our little luggage-skinned buddy to the next level.



At this point, Fox is only giving out a few tidbits of information, regarding the storyline and any enhancements that are being made. We were told that the sequel will be running on a highly modified version of the original's engine, running in the PlayStation's high-resolution mode. This engine will have a lot more open space and diverse environments and will run at a constant 30 frames per second. In addition, Croc himself will have a host of new moves and abilities that haven't been made exactly clear at this point. What is obvious is that Croc will again have to set out and stop the nefarious Baron Dante while rescuing the helpless furballs known as the Gobboos. This time around the little guys (and gals) have dressed up for the occasion, and will be in full uniform depending on the level's theme. We expect to have a lot more information on Croc II, which is slated for a Christmas release. But for now, we thought you'd like a first-look at this promising new title.

Grog



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# ASTEROIDS

## 1 COIN 1 PLAY

In keeping with our tradition of spotlighting a particular developer or game every month, this month's *Excerpt* features a quick chat with Seth Gerson, the producer of Activision's / Quikdraw Developments Ltd.'s next-gen version of *Asteroids*. His previous endeavors found him serving as the Associate Producer for the German, French and Spanish versions of *Dark Reign* (a PC strategy title), as well as Associate Producing the sampler program at *Saga of Amalur*. Quikdraw Developments Ltd. previous titles include: *Wrecking Crew*, a racing game for the PlayStation game console system, *Albers 3*, *Pagermaster* and *Mauz Malters* for various 8-bit and 16-bit console systems.

**PSEX: WHAT WAS THE GENESIS OF THE IDEA FOR REVIVING ASTEROIDS AND UPDATING IT FOR TODAY'S GAMERS? IS THE END RESULT WHAT YOU/THE DEVELOPERS HAD ENVISIONED WHEN FIRST STARTING OUT?**

**SETH:** OUR GOAL IS TO BRING THE CLASSIC GAME INTO THE '90'S — AND THEN SOME. THE KEY TO THIS IS PHYSICS AND GAMEPLAY. ALSO, WE ARE CREATING A VERY ADVANCED MODULAR ENGINE.

**PSEX:** CAN YOU GIVE OUR READERS A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE GAMEPLAY AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM THE ORIGINAL ASTEROIDS. IS THE GAME PLAYED OUT IN 3D SPACE? HOW CLOSE ARE YOU STICKING TO THE ORIGINAL'S FORMULA?

**SETH:** THE KEY TO THE ORIGINAL IS THE GAMEPLAY. WE ORIGINALLY EXPERIMENTED WITH A 3D FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW, BUT THIS WAS NOT ASTEROIDS. WE ARE STRIVING TO BE TRUE TO THE ORIGINAL. SO, INSTEAD, WE HAVE INTRODUCED SPATIAL PHENOMENA THAT DO ALTER THE PHYSICS — SUCH AS BLACK HOLES THAT SUCK YOU



# EXCERPT

IN, AND WORM HOLES THAT TELEPORT YOU. WE'VE ALSO INTRODUCED HUGE BOSSES. BY USING SOME VERY COMPLEX MATH AND AN ADVANCED HEIRCHICAL ANIMATION SYSTEM, THE BOSSES PERFORM AMAZING, COMPLEX ATTACKS

PSEX: HOW ABOUT A LITTLE HISTORY ON YOURSELF, THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM, AND WHAT GAMES THEY MIGHT HAVE WORKED ON IN THE PAST. ARE YOU/THEY HARD-CORE FANS OF THE ORIGINAL ASTEROIDS OR OTHER RETRO-TITLES?

SETH: WE LOVE ASTEROIDS. I PERSONALLY AM A FAN OF A LOT OF DIFFERENT GAMES, AND SO ARE THEY. THE TRUTH IS, WE PLAY TOO MUCH. WE ARE TRYING TO TEMPER THIS. WELL, OK — MAYBE NOT.

PSEX: WHAT KIND OF TECHNOLOGY IS GOING INTO THE GAME? DO THE PLAYSTATION AND PC VERSIONS DIFFER IN ANY WAY?

SETH: TECHNOLOGY IS THE KEY TO THE GAME. THERE ARE PARTICLE ANIMATION SYSTEMS SHOWING THOUSANDS OF PARTICLES FOR EXPLOSIONS, PLUS VERY ADVANCED ALGORITHMS FOR THE CAMERA SYSTEM. THESE GUYS PRETTY MUCH SWITCHED TO A VERY SOPHISTICATED 3D PLOTTING SYSTEM WITHIN A WEEK'S TIME! THE TRUTH IS, I HAVE TO KEEP HOLDING THE PROGRAMMERS BACK. THEY GET THESE ADVANCED IDEAS, AND WILL STAY UP ALL NIGHT ADDING NEW FEATURES, JUST TO TEST THEORETICAL IDEAS. THE AMOUNT OF INNOVATION ON A WEEKLY BASIS IS UNBELIEVABLE.

PSEX: ADMITTEDLY, ALL OF US OLD-TIMERS HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF THESE ORIGINAL TITLES BUT, WHEN GOING BACK AND PLAYING THEM AGAIN, THEY REALLY SHOW THEIR AGE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO "SPICE-UP" OR ENHANCE THE GAMEPLAY?

SETH: I AGREE — BUT, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY NEVER DIES. THAT IS THE CORE BEHIND THESE CLASSIC GAMES. WITH THE ORIGINAL, YOU WERE LOOKING AT VECTORS FOR HOURS ON END, AND SPENT HOW MUCH MONEY? PICK ANY GOOD GAME TODAY AND THINK ABOUT ONE YOU PLAY OVER AND OVER. WHAT IS ITS BEST FEATURE? I AM BETTING YOU SAY GAMEPLAY. WE ARE ALSO ADDING ALL OF THE EXTRAS AND DETAILS THAT

GAMERS EXPECT: GREAT SPECIAL EFFECTS, FIVE ZONES, WITH 10 LEVELS A PIECE AND HUGE BOSSES (TO NAME JUST A FEW)..

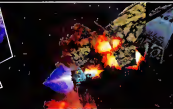
PSEX: ONE LAST QUESTION, WILL YOU BE INCORPORATING THE ORIGINAL GAME SOMEWHERE INSIDE THIS NEW VERSION?

SETH: IF YOU LOOK HARD ENOUGH, YOU JUST MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND IT..

PSEX: THANKS A LOT FOR TAKING THE TIME OUT OF YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR US. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMPART TO OUR READERS BEFORE YOU GO?

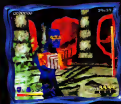
SETH: CHECK ASTEROIDS OUT! IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE.

GAME OVER



# NINJA

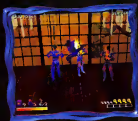
## SHADOW OF DARKNESS



Ninja: Shadow of the Darkness has been talked about and shown in the pages of various gaming pubs for well over two years. During that time, the game has switched platforms (yes, like Core/Eidos' Fighting Force, it was originally planned for release on the now defunct Saturn) and gone through many tweaks and evolutions. Although, the developers at UK-based Core Design Co., never lost sight of their main goal, which was to make an arcade-style, 3D action/adventure that paid homage to such classic video games as Ghouls and Ghosts, Ninja Gaiden, Final Fight and Shinobi, while maintaining its own originality. By all accounts, they've definitely succeeded, and have made an action-packed brawler that is chock full of special effects, graphical details and even some puzzle solving.

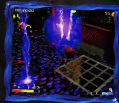
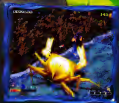
The first thing you should know about Ninja is that it's not a Tomb Raider clone. While it is in 3D and displayed in a 3rd-person perspective similar to that of the adventures of the buxom Ms. Croft, Ninja is more about whompin' and a stompin' and less about exploration and puzzle

# EXTREME



solving. While there is some mild puzzle solving going on, most of it involves finding a key to open a gate or uncovering hidden treasure chests. One example of a more difficult puzzle is on the Monastery level, where you have to figure out that the closed windows throughout the level have to be shot open with your throwing stars in order to let the moon-light come through which, in turn, activates the end of level portal. Like I said, nothing too taxing — you need to keep your mind and sharpened skills on the action at hand.

Ninja is structured like most arcade-style beat 'em ups. In any given level you will encounter wave after wave of relentless enemies who, of course, will stop at nothing to kill you. Eventually, you'll encounter an end-of-level boss who, again, is looking for some grade-A Ninja meat. Once beaten, it's on to the next locale and the next set of baddies. While the game is displayed in 3D, it's designed more specifically to keep you moving toward the end of the level. The camera and perspective is pre-scripted to show you as much of the environment as possible, while keeping you in the thick of the action — which there is plenty of. It seems that our Ninja has made enemies with just about everyone he encounters (even the local wildlife). Luckily, he's well-trained in the Martial Arts and has an impressive arsenal of moves at his disposal.





In addition to hand-to-hand combat, there are a variety of weapons he can wield from time to time, such as axes, swords and the occasional nunchukas. And like Shinobi, he also has an unlimited supply of throwing stars (which can be powered up) that come in handy in sticky situations. Beyond all that, the Ninja has a special set of devastating magics that he can unleash which will cause massive damage to anybody caught in its perimeter. And, if all else fails, there's always the smoke bomb which, when utilized, will send him back to the last checkpoint and well out of the way of danger.

Ninja's graphical presentation is top-notch. While the game might have started its life on the Saturn, the graphical effects are, for the most part, PlayStation-specific. There is transparent, running water, amazing light sourcing, brilliant flashes of lightning and a multitude of special effects. In addition, the developers have gone to painstaking means to give the player a believable inhabited environment, with such graphical touches as squirrels scurrying up trees or rabbits hopping out of your way. From time to time you'll stumble onto a group of enemies that might be hanging out roasting their dinner on a spit over a fire. It's little details such as these that make a good game great. The cinematic cut-scenes between levels

# EXTREME



are all played out using the same in-game graphics. This not only cuts down loading times but maintains the specific look and feel of the game throughout. The next couple of months will be the most important for Ninja. At this time, it is still being worked on, (the game we are playing is about 60% complete) and there still may be some changes to the graphics and gameplay. The final product is due to ship sometime this September, and from the experience we've had so far, Ninja: Shadow of Darkness should be another hit for Eidos — who is proving that there is more to them than just a pretty face and big boobs. Since we've covered Ninja in our pages more than a few times, the next time you see it here will be the final review in our Durated section — it's a safe bet that I'll be the first in line when it finally comes in.

Greg





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PLAYERS™



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## FIRST PRIZE:

**Five First Prize winners will receive One NFL Xtreme "Swag Pack" which includes: NFL Xtreme-branded duffel bag, a NFL Xtreme hat and a copy of NFL Xtreme videogame (approximate retail value \$100).**



## SECOND PRIZE:

**Ten Second Prize winners will receive a copy of NFL Xtreme videogame (approximate retail value \$50).**

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1. No Purchase Necessary. To enter, send a postcard (no envelope please) with your name, age, address, phone number to: NFL Xtreme Sweepstakes, c/o MDS, 5532 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034-2549. Entries must be received no later than September 4, 1998. Only one entry per person. Duplicate entries will be disqualified. Sony Interactive Studios America (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late, multi-line, illegible, or otherwise defective entries.

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7. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.





## FUTURE.PLAY

### SPYRO THE DRAGON

SONY/UNIVERSAL • SEPTEMBER

This month, we got our greedy gaming hands on an updated version of SCEA's/Universal Interactive's "Spyro". Since we last played it, Insomniac Games (the developers) have added a number of new levels, including a few of the amazing bonus levels — where Spyro is able to fly. The game's characters also begin to come to life in this build, with Spyro's voice partially implemented (if you missed our June cover feature, Spyro's voice is supplied by the guy who does the "Yo quiero Taco Bell" commercials), as well as some of the Crystal Dragons and enemies. We've also begun to play around with some of the later levels — they are immense! The design team has also added another camera option to the mix and some unbelievably cool effects, like magicians that change steps into slippery ramps when you approach, speed pads that give Spyro a "turbo boost," and a number of enemy-based sight gags. If all goes well, we should have a reviewable Spyro for our September issue. Keep this one on your holiday shopping list folks, it's going to be huge!

### CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED

SONY/UNIVERSAL • NOVEMBER

Last year we thought that there would be no way that Naughty Dog could pull off another Crash sequel that looked and played better than the last. As what's typical with these amazing developers, they've proven us wrong. Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped takes a lot of the tried-and-true gameplay from the original two and adds and enhances it with a multitude of new moves, features and special effects. Besides the ability to play as Coco — Crash's baby sister — and the ability to double jump, super body slam and temporarily hover by spinning Crash furiously around in the air, there will be a few amazing surprises. The biggest (and still yet to be shown) is the addition of a few free-roaming, go anywhere 3D levels. As far as we know, these will be incorporated around riding vehicles or animals, such as Coco riding a jet ski. With any luck (and much oajoling). Sony just might cough-up a playable for our next issue.



### COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE

PSYGNOSIS • SEPTEMBER

Colony Wars: Vengeance is looking unbelievably awesome. Here's yet another example of developers taking a great game even further (in literally eight months time). Featuring enhanced gameplay and technology from the original, Vengeance adds a variety of planet-based missions to the mix, where the dogfights and battles will take place across a range of highly detailed landscapes and environments. Returning are the complex, multiple-objective missions and plot twists, but with all new and enhanced graphics, physics models, fighters from which to choose, weapons and a more enriched, animated gaming environment. The storyline picks up 100 years from the last, where you take on the role of an idealistic young fighter pilot who soon becomes involved in a complex struggle to discover whose side he should actually be fighting on.

# EXPECTING



Forget every gruesome battle you have ever waged. Introducing Mortal Kombat 4 with newly forged weapons that will slash and bludgeon beyond imagination. And a total 3-D environment that will take your senses to dizzying new heights.

That which calls the warriors  
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## FUTURE PLAY

## INTERNATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

THQ • SEPTEMBER



While road-rallying is a huge motor sport in Europe, the US following remains limited. This hasn't stopped a number of companies from releasing rally titles here, however (who can forget the ill-fated Need for Speed: V-Rally). THQ is now getting in on the action with their latest import, International Rally Championship. This racing game seems cool if you're a fan of games like Sony's Rally Cross or Sega Rally. Dual Shock Analog support means that not only will you be able to take those turns like a pro, but you'll be able to feel 'em. The game is displayed in the PlayStation's high-resolution mode, which shows off some stunning graphics. There's Pro and Arcade Modes, which you can race with one of the nine different rally cars available, and over 60 tracks are included, ranging from dark forests and ice-covered mountain roads to arid deserts. There's even a handy-dandy 3D track editor that allows you to create your own courses when you get tired of playing those that are provided. International Rally Championship should be available come September.

## G-DARIUS

THQ • AUGUST

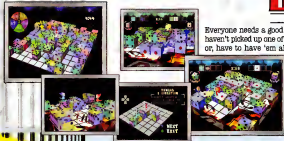
The Japanese sure do love their shooters and THQ's betting that American gamers will share in their enthusiasm. G-Darius is the latest from Taiko — a flashback homage to their old-school quarter muncher that has graced many a gaming platform (from the NES and Super Famicom to the PC Engine and MegaDrive). G-Darius has been given the requisite 3D upgrade, which means that all the ships and enemies have that high-tech, sharp polygon look to them, while retaining the essence of the original shooters. Things that set G-Darius apart from your normal wave-after-endless-wave-of-enemies shooter: a branching network of levels (which means you don't play through the game once and put it away), the ability to capture incoming enemies to use as support ships (kinda like Galaga) and gigantic technofish bosses. G-Darius supports the rumble feature of the Dual Shock controller, but, oddly, not the sticks.



## DEVIL DICE

THQ • AUGUST

Everyone needs a good puzzle game to round out their PlayStation library and, if you haven't picked up one of the few recent releases (IQ, Super Puzzle Fighter, Tecmo Stadium) or, have to have 'em all, then THQ's Devil Dice is just what the doctor ordered. This additive, 3D multiplayer game pits players against the clock or a few friends (up to four can play simultaneously) in a fast and furious game of matching up like-numbers of dice. This is executed by dancing a little demon over the tops of dice, which in turn tumbles and turns them. The key is to figure out which direction and how many "turns" of the dice it will take to match up with another. Line up three or more and they disappear — of course, more are being replaced all of the time. Four different modes and sharp, high-resolution graphics round out this additive puzzler.



# EXPECTING

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## FUTURE.PLAY



## BIG AIR

ACCOLADE • SEPTEMBER

Yes, you can expect to see no less than five new snowboarding games this winter from a multitude of publishers (Capcom, 999, ESPN to name a few) and, from what we've seen so far, there will only be one or two standouts. With Accolade's Big Air, would-be boarders will have the ability to launch themselves into extreme international snowboarding action, competing against riders from around the world in Half Pipe, Big Air, Boardercross, Slalom and Free Ride competitions, from the safety of their warm and cozy home. Of course, Big Air will be officially licensed and feature real snowboards and apparel from Palmer, Morrow, Ride, Wave Rave and Joyride and will have a multitude of features, from a detailed and realistic 3D engine with nine unique courses in six international locations, to an alternative, grunge-metal soundtrack and two-player, simultaneous split-screen action. Check back with us in the next few issues to see how they shred against their numerous competitors.

## TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD 2

ACCOLADE • SEPTEMBER

In addition to Accolade's upcoming Test Drive 5, they are also diligently working on the sequel to their Off Road series, with Test Drive Off Road 2. Admittedly, the first TD: Off Road wasn't quite up to snuff with the quality of their usual products, but the sequel promises to deliver, by utilizing the graphic engine from Test Drive 4. In the game, players race against a full grid of other opponents between trees, over hills, through mud, sand, snow, water and any other obstacle that gets in their way. Expect to see six licensed off-road vehicles (including the Hummer) with their own specific attributes, such as top speed, acceleration, uphill power, traction, turning radius, force and suspension. In addition there are a total of six tracks based on real-world locations, breakable objects, modifiable vehicles, an extensive variety of racing modes and, like last year, (with Gravity Kills) a licensed soundtrack by "Sevendust".



## STREET FIGHTER 2 COLLECTION

CAPCOM • SEPTEMBER

Um... there's got to be a reason that you'd want this disc, if for nothing more than to round out your Street Fighter collection. Actually, there is one reason to own Street Fighter 2 Collection: Street Fighter II Turbo Hyper Fighting. An excellent game from back in the day, but not as exciting now as it once was. The disc also includes arcade-perfect ports of the original Street Fighter 2 and Street Fighter 2 Turbo. It's pretty cool to be able to go through the first three SF games to look at the tweaks that Capcom was slowly making to the series. By watching the careful evolution of the game — making the four bosses playable, being able to select different colors, new moves added — along with the tuning and tightening of the Street Fighter engine, you can see that very little in the way of progress has been made to the fighting game genre since 1992 or so.



# EXPECTING

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## FUTURE PLAY

## MADDEN NFL 99

EA SPORTS • SEPTEMBER

Madden is back for the new season, armed to the teeth with polygon player animation and a host of new features. A first-playable of the game arrived at our doors just as we were finishing this issue and we were able to log just a bit of hands-on time for this preview. Madden NFL 99 is touting a one-button interface that "...allows novice users to quickly develop the skill and strategy needed to play the game and further expand the interactive football category through mass market appeal" (from EA Sports' press release). Uh, O.K.... the best-selling sports game series of all-time feels they are lacking mass market appeal? Go figure. Anyway, besides the cruise control mode, the game offers over 100 NFL teams, past and present, a Franchise Mode that allows for multiple season play, high-resolution stadiums and background graphics and more Madden votes than ever before. Our initial reaction? The game looks great but we'll wait until the final version to comment on gameplay. Look for Dave's review in the September issue.



## MOTO RACER 2

EA • AUGUST

Electronic Arts and Delphine are back on "track" with the sequel to one of the best racers to appear on the PlayStation. "Moto Racer 2" continues where the original left off, with a truck-load of new features. Moto Racer 2 gives the player 38 new tracks to race on, including circuits in the Amazon Rain Forest and the Sahara Desert. In addition, the game features a track editor so that players can modify existing tracks or create new ones of their own design. The game makes use of dynamic camera angles, allowing the user to save his races as movies to be played at any time, two player, head-to-head racing, Dual Shock support, day and night modes, weather effects, and both arcade and simulation game-play modes. We've had a little time behind the handlebars and it looks like MR2 is going to be more than a worthy successor to the original. EA currently has MR2 scheduled for an August release.



## THUNDER FORCE V

WORKING DESIGNS • JULY

For those of you who like your arcade shooters insanely difficult, Working Designs brings you Thunder Force V, which, up until WD sent us this version, was one of the few reasons in the past year to own a Sega Saturn. This long-running Genesis series made the jump to 32-bit last year (Greg still claims that Thunder Force IV: Lightning Force, (or, as Sega called it: "Lightening (sic) Force") was one of the best Genesis games ever), and is now making it's way to the PlayStation. Like all Japanese shooters, Thunder Force V features a variety of special weapons, multi-level power ups, hordes of grail-like enemies and mega bosses that take serious punishment. Thunder Force V is lightning-fast action that will numb your thumbs after extended game sessions. The game also has full Dual Shock support, so it buzzes and jumps when you're hit.



# EXPECTING



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- **You must understand and take full responsibility for all decisions made in regards to this ad if you breach these terms and conditions.**

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AND PROCEED AT MY OWN RISK.**

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actual in-game character shots

Sadistic four-player fighting

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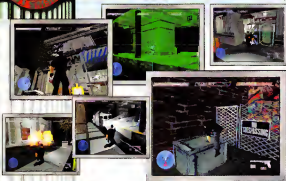


## FUTURE.PLAY

## SYPHON FILTER

989 STUDIOS • NOVEMBER

Up until E3, Siphon Filter was a well kept secret over at 989 Studios (formerly Sony Interactive Studios). The game, being developed by Kadane in Oregon, combines the best elements of Goldeneye, Tomb Raider and Metal Gear Solid to create a truly cool and unique experience. In the game, you take on the role of Gabriel Logan, the world's top counter-terrorist. Your assignment is to stop an act of biological terrorism on U.S. soil by infiltrating the organization responsible for creating a deadly virus — the Siphon Filter. As Logan, you'll have the ability to wield a variety of weapons on the fly — including a deadly sniper rifle with which to pick off enemies from a safe vantage point — and can run, crawl, climb, jump, roll, shoot and interact with just about any object in the environment. Don't want your enemies to see you? Shoot out the lights and strap-on your infra-red sight. How cool is that? This is a title to watch closely over the next few months, as it could give even Metal Gear Solid a run for its money.



## ASSAULT

MIDWAY • AUGUST

Gee, what do ya know — an apocalypse has shattered a peaceful utopian city and now, with most of the population dead, injured or fleeing, reports are coming in of a rapidly spreading infestation of bizarre mutant creatures. Lucky for you, you're part of a crack assault team specializing in heavy weaponry and combating hostile alien environments — while certainly not the most original of storylines, by any stretch of the imagination, it does make for good video game fodder, and that's exactly what Assault is. Looking to take on Konami with their new Contra title, Assault is a 3D action/shooter that pits up to two players simultaneously against relentless hordes of aliens. Expect amazing, One-like special effects and pyrotechnics, six huge levels with secret areas, a multitude of selectable weapons and power-ups, and non-stop, white-knuckle gameplay. Assault is being developed in the UK by Telstar.



## S.C.A.R.S.

UBI SOFT • SEPTEMBER

S.C.A.R.S. (which stands for Super Animal Racing Simulation — those crazy French!) is a killer combat racing game (which could be compared loosely to Wipeout) that blends super-fast racing, strategic combat and amazing 3D visuals. In the game, you control one of nine hyper-charged vehicles that have been designed by futuristic supercomputers and are based around some of nature's most ruthless killers (hence the A for Animal). Performance of your souped-up vehicle is determined by four key attributes: speed, acceleration, grip and your skills. It's up to you to learn your opponent's weaknesses, find the shortest route and utilize the numerous weapons and power-ups that are strewn about each course. Besides the tight graphics engine and pumping gameplay, S.C.A.R.S. offers a Mirror Mode, brilliant light-sourcing, and two player, head-to-head combat.



# EXPECTING

# KULA WORLD

PSYGNOSIS • JULY

Pygnosis' Kula World is a unique, 3D puzzle game that puts you in control of a shiny beach ball. You would think life as an air-filled rubber ball would be another happy-go-lucky day at the beach. No such luck in Kula world, where the object of the game is to carefully navigate said ball through a variety of 3D levels that just happen to be suspended miles up in the air (with no safety net) and filled with a variety of heinous traps and pitfalls. To add insult to injury, you have to rotate that ball as quickly as possible, as there is an added time element that continually counts down. If you're still having a hard time trying to conceptualize the game, think of it as a 3D Marble Madness and you'll get the picture. High-resolution graphics and simple, yet disturbingly addictive gameplay round out this new title. As with Roscoe McGovern (reviewed last issue), Kula World is a last-minute acquisition that was programmed by an outside development group in the UK.



# DEAD IN THE WATER

ASC GAMES • SEPTEMBER

No doubt, Dead in the Water, developed by Player One and published by ASC Games, will be recognized as the first PlayStation game to create very realistic feeling, and looking, water effects. Here is a 3D combat racing game in the vein of Twisted Metal, that puts a variety of humorous, armed-to-the-teeth, tongue-in-cheek characters against each other, in an effort to conquer the tumultuous water-based raceways around the world. Dead in the Water's track and battlegrounds are filled with secret routes, twists and turns that send players spiraling up in the air and diving down underneath the water. In the game, you'll race against a variety of opponents but, if you wish, you can choose an all-out battle mode, where the last one standing is the winner. In addition to the action-packed gameplay, DITW is packed full of special effects and eye candy, from huge nuclear explosions to level-specific environmental hazards. The game showed up literally a day before press, so we will be back next issue with a more detailed, hands-on preview. In any event, it's readily apparent that this could be one of the year's sleeper hits.



# WILD 9

INTERPLAY • OCTOBER

Shiny/Interplay's Wild 9 is finally about done, after numerous delays and a total reworking of the game's core engine. The near-final product that we had a chance to play is a mixture of tight action/platforming and unique gameplay twists. The most notable — and coolest — feature of Wild 9 is Wax's (the main character) ability to utilize a "grasping beam" as a torture device. Touch any enemy or environmental object with the beam and it will latch onto that creature or object. Then, within the limited amount of time it's charged up, you can either pound the living crud out of the enemy by pressing left and right on the control pad or you can torture them in some evil and heinous way.

In one of the few levels we played, we were able to throw 'em into spiked gears, use them as a wedge to stop huge rotating fans, hold them over smoke-spewing pits until they died of asphyxiation, drown them in large pools of water, use them to put out fires, and impale them on large steel spikes, then use their bodies as stepping stones. The graphics are sharp and the levels are somewhat scripted, a la Pandemonium, although there are many more paths and secret areas to explore.



# NFL XTREME

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY 989 STUDIOS



989 Studios hits the ground running (and passing) with its first sports title since the company's separation from Sony Computer Entertainment America, "NFL Xtreme". While the new software publisher will be shipping both NCAA GameBreaker 99 and NFL GameDay 99 in the Fall, NFL Xtreme brings a lighter and faster approach to the game — featuring five-on-five, everybody-eligible football that brings back memories of grass, rain and mud at the local park with as many of the neighborhood kids as you could scrounge up. Of course, we didn't have NFL uniforms and stadiums, but we were all legends in our own minds, weren't we?

The first, and most obvious, comparison to be drawn to NFL Xtreme is that of Midway's arcade mega-hit, "NFL Blitz" (scheduled for release on the PlayStation in September). Let's get this one out of the way fast, and then move into the details of Xtreme. The games ARE similar in concept and, while Xtreme lacks a little of the polish and speed of the arcade Blitz (kind of tough to keep up with the 3Dfx technology that powers THAT bad boy), it is the best looking football game to date on the PlayStation — and it plays like a bandit. I should also tell you that, in spite of the football purist in me, I love Blitz... I've been playing it for months — both the arcade game and the pixel-perfect PC/3Dfx translation, and consider myself to be both a fan and well-versed in its strengths and weaknesses — which makes my enthusiastic conversion to the charms of NFL Xtreme even more impressive. Let's take a look...

NFL Xtreme starts with brand new technology. The San Diego-based development team has created a high-resolution graphic engine that displays 10 polygonal players on screen — each consisting of 400 polygons (4x the number/character found in GameDay 98). The players are large and the frame rate is extremely quick (when the game is set on the "Fast" option), with texture-smoothed playing fields and logos. The players are so detailed, in fact, that you can actually see helmets and uniforms that look like they are supposed to — with a level of detail that rivals the best that arcade Blitz, or QB Club on the N64 for that matter, can offer. The game features more animation(s) than any football game to date, with the highlights including helmets that are knocked

off the ball carrier's head with a well-placed diving tackle, jerseys that are ripped away when the ball carrier tries to spin free of a tackle, dust clouds that follow you runner when you hit the turbo button, after the whistle attacks, standing leaps over defenders and the standard diving, jumping, swimming, stiff arming and juking moves to which fans of the GameDay series have become accustomed. And we can't leave the subject of technology without talking about the "loading" screens — simply the BEST in the business (see screen shot... YEAH, BABY... YEAH!).

As good as Xtreme's technology is, it is gameplay that drives the product home and makes it such a great value. Players have the ability to play over an entire, 1998 schedule, NFL season, complete with injuries, trades, substitutions, user records, a draft and the ability to build a dynasty team, exhaustive statistical tracking, create-a-player abilities, pre-set audibles and the like. In addition, game options include variable weather conditions (with great looking snow and rain), variable gameplay speed, different



# CRATED



**NFL League Leaders**

**PASSING**

POS	NAME	GP	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
QB	D. FORD	5	171	62	890	6	2
QB	T. YOUNG	5	100	43	787	0	0
QB	J. HUNTER	5	100	43	700	0	0
QB	D. MURPHY	5	100	38	722	0	0
QB	T. COLLINS	5	100	39	501	0	0
QB	C. ROBINSON	5	100	32	475	0	0
QB	G. HARRIS	5	100	33	460	0	0
QB	J. CRIVELLO	5	99	46	519	1	2
QB	J. STROM	5	99	49	548	0	0
QB	D. BLANDER	5	99	55	672	7	2

△ POSITIONS    L/R BY CATEGORY    ◀ COLUMN



player sizes, four different cameras, instant replay, injuries, Dual Shock support and player cards.

On the field, players will find a good-sized play book and a game that, while easy to get into, has a surprising amount of depth. The game is set up so that the first down markers are fixed at the 20, 40, 40 and 20 yard lines and you have the traditional four downs to make it 20 yards. If you receive the kick and start from your own 18, then you will be facing first and 2 or, if you get the ball on your 22, it will be first and 18. Part of your success in the offensive scheme will be based on how you use your receivers. All four players are eligible to catch the ball — and some plays send them all out into the pattern — leaving your QB completely exposed. In a like manner, defense can also be played in an all-or-nothing fashion. There is one other significant rule change — the ball is marked where the ball carrier lands. This is guaranteed to have you thinking about how you use all of those special moves — jumping for a ball at the stick on fourth down won't be good enough when the defender works you and knocks you back five yards toward the line of scrimmage!

The emphasis in NFL Xtreme has been placed on offense and in making use of the special moves. The moves at your disposal give you the ability to work your way out of a jam — and you can pull them off in succession: Start with a quick turbo boost out of the backfield, followed by a spin to shake the pursuing defender, another turbo, then a leap over the diving, would-be tackler in the defensive backfield — followed by a mad dash to the end zone! You will find yourself using the instant replay feature time and time again — especially when playing against a friend.

On the negative side of the balance sheet, there are a few AI foibles that keep NFL Xtreme from being all it could be. The computer opponent doesn't seem to be able to tell time. When setting the game up to play two or three minute quarters, it doesn't adjust its internal clock accordingly. An example of this occurs when the com-

puter is behind with less than a minute to play in the fourth quarter. It seems to think that there is almost no time left, and that a field goal will give them the victory. They kick the FG, go up by one or two points and think the fat lady is on in 40 seconds. But when playing on the "fast" setting, 40 seconds is almost 1/3 of the period — equal to five minutes in a real game. I then have plenty of time to move the ball down the field and score the winning touchdown. In addition, the instant replay feature is a little rough — sometimes it won't capture the entire play and some of the animations, like the jersey ripping, simply won't show up on replay.

Other than these minor complaints, I have to say that I have had an absolute blast playing NFL Xtreme. After two seasons of play (one with the "minors, one with the classic-uniform Jets), I am still loving the impact and speed of



the game and the depth, in terms of team building and season play, that the design team has brought to this no-rules arcade football game. The icing on the cake, NFL Xtreme has set the benchmark for a new breed of hybrid football/arcade games on the PlayStation — and it is a standard that Blitz and all other would-be competitors are going to find tough to match, let alone eclipse.

Dave

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 94%

### COMPATIBILITY



I am still loving the impact and speed of the game and the depth, in terms of team building and season play, that the design team has brought to this no-rules arcade football game. The icing on the cake, NFL Xtreme has set the benchmark for a new breed of hybrid football/arcade games on the PlayStation — and it is a standard that Blitz and all other would-be competitors are going to find tough to match, let alone eclipse.



# POCKET FIGHTER

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY CAPCOM



Capcom's Super Puzzle Fighter still heats up my PlayStation a few times a month, even this long after the game's release. The combination of hilarious Capcom in-jokes and brain-sucking, addictive gameplay pull me back with a regular frequency — honestly, I play Puzzle Fighter more than I ever played Resident Evil 2. The cutesy characters fighting in the background of the game are great for spectators, but are a bit of a distraction to the actual players. Now you've got the chance to examine those characters without worrying about your opponent raining a firestorm of gems on your head. This time, you've just got to keep from getting your animated booty kicked by the other fighter.

Chances are good that you've never seen Pocket Fighter before, despite the fact that it was actually released in the arcades here in the States. Capcom Coin-Op seems to have a serious lack of interest in promoting any game that isn't a Marvel-licensed or "normal" Street Fighter game; even awesome titles like Vampire Savior are completely mis-handled by the lackluster arcade division. I'm completely stoked that Capcom's bringing Pocket Fighter out for the PlayStation, even though it lacks the backing of any sort of big-time arcade recognition.

The basis of Pocket Fighter is still Street Fighter, but it's SF run through a Looney Tunes blender. Street Fighter's traditional six-button setup has been replaced by a



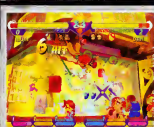
very simplistic four-button control: punch, kick, special, move and taunt. A bar running across the bottom of the screen shows you your available special moves, flipping between an image of the move, followed by a diagram of the move's execution. Special moves will power up or change as you collect gems by bashing them out of your opponent, opening chests or hitting flying objects. Capcom's kept Pocket Fighter as simple as possible, which should hopefully appeal to as many people as the puzzle game did.

That's not to say that there isn't a decent fighting game engine in Pocket Fighter (don't expect the elegance or beauty of Alpha 2 or Tekken 3). You can play the game as a straight-out button masher and do alright, but figuring out each character's various combos will definitely speed you through the rounds. Most of the combos little more than the "punch-punch-kick" variety, but there are more complex ones that pay off with comical results.



# RATED





Pocket Fighter's main appeal, of course, is the super-cutey characters. The Japanese sure love their "hyper-deformed" look, which translates as big heads and little bodies. Scoring successive hits in a combo will cause the fighters' costumes to change. Chun Li turns into Jill from Resident Evil, Zangief will change into one of the wrestlers from Slam Masters and Felicia will become Mega Man. The entire game is packed with self-referential Capcom humor, with all sorts of obscure trivia happening in the backgrounds. The full line up of Pocket Fighters is a mixture of Street Fighter Alpha, Street Fighter 3, Darkstalkers and the unreleased Red Earth, and includes Ken, Ryu, Chun Li, Zangief, Morrigan, Felicia, Hsien Ko, Ibuki, Sakura and "hidden" characters Dan and Akuma.

There's another game within Pocket Fighter, but I was less than impressed. You answer a series of strange personality questions, which the computer uses to compile a unique fighter character for you. After creating a character, you play through a Quest game, earning different items that power up your character's abilities. There was a similar mode in Puzzle Fighter, where you were rewarded with secrets and bonuses for beating the computer opponents, but its execution was much better and a lot more rewarding than this particular mini-game. The drawback is that you don't actually control your character on this "quest;" instead you sit back and watch as both fighters bash each other around the ring on autopilot.

After clicking through the quiz section, Pocket Fighter declared my personality to be "Sturdy Trash." I was given the following advice to help me live my life: "Don't be so average! Strive for more in life! You are a cruel person. People tend to hate you, so watch your back. Try being nice!" Never

have I felt the core of my personality so proficiently analyzed. It's like Pocket Fighter has aimed a beacon into the dark, creepy places of my soul to expose my character flaws. Thank you, Capcom, for helping me to see the aspects of myself that I need to overcome. You know, I really have always thought of myself as Sturdy Trash, and it's really nice to get some validation from a video game.

Pocket Fighter is a fun, simple game. Hard-core Capcom fans (and there are still quite a few of them running around out there) will get a kick out of the wacky hijinks that go on in this title. Capcom got a lot of feedback from players who wanted to control the super-deformed fighters in "Puzzle Fighter," and this game is a natural spinoff from that title. Not exactly the



most challenging of fighting games, but a hoot none the less. Simple controls and very family-oriented humor make this one a good gift for junior that won't have parents cringing after seeing the game in action. Pocket Fighter should be real popular with those people who enjoy fighting games but aren't interested in memorizing long lists of moves and combos.

Chris

## PS EXTREME 80%

### COMPATIBILITY

Top 2  
Players

Pocket Fighter is a fun, simple game. Hard-core Capcom fans (and there are still quite a few of them running around and there will get a kick out of the wacky hijinks that go on in this title. Capcom got a lot of feedback from players who wanted to control the super-deformed fighters in "Puzzle Fighter," and this game is a natural spinoff from that title. Not exactly the most challenging of fighting games, but a hoot none the less. Simple controls and very family-oriented humor make this one a good gift for junior that won't have parents cringing after seeing the game in action. Pocket Fighter should be real popular with those people who enjoy fighting games but aren't interested in memorizing long lists of moves and combos.



# ELEMENTAL GEARBOLT

PUBLISHED BY WORKING DESIGNS — DEVELOPED BY SCEJ



Coming soon to a PSX near you, one of our favorite companies, Working Designs (hi Zach!), brings forth a US translation of an Alpha System-made shooter/gun-game called Elemental Gearbolt (EG from now on). With this release, Working Designs adds to the PSX's growing gun game library. Admittedly not knowing about EG at first, when Greg handed me the reviewable copy, I thought it was another one of those "I don't wanna review this so you get to" games. Fortunately for me, EG turned out to be more than I bargained for, much more actually. Let me elaborate.

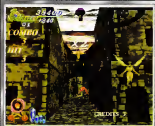
As funny as it may seem, the first thing I noticed after popping in EG was the music. I know, I know... I'm weird, but the title screen music reminded me of some sensitive Karate Kid theme and after hearing it, I was really ready to play. Anyway, I'll get back to the audio in a second... but first, the gameplay. Typical of shooters, EG is rail-based, which means you are on a "virtual" ride where the computer controls the pace of the game... and you just interact with the enemies/background via light gun. You play as one of two women that seem to be heading some form of rebellion against a huge empire. Since I didn't have the official story available during my review, I'm sorta forced to speculate. Anyway, it seems that these two



women are released from their status when someone in the empire figures out how to free them to help their cause. This is all revealed in the excellent anime intro, and played out between stages in equally excellent anime cut-scenes. I was very impressed with the English voice actors used throughout the game, since normally translations of Anime and video games suffer because of sub-par choices for spoken dialog. During the game you are attacked by various enemies which are both polygonal and sprite-based. By shooting enemies in succession, you can increase your HIT and COMBO counters to multiply bonus points. The HIT meter counts all successive hits without a miss, and the COMBO meter counts all successive kills without a miss. Throughout the game, you only have a choice between 3 weapons: Fire Element, which shoots a single, but



# RATED



powerful, shot, Water Element, which shoots a few quick, but weak blasts; and the Lightning Element, which basically acts like a shotgun. After each level you have the option to take all the points you earned during the previous stage and put it into your permanent score, or you can sacrifice it to pump up your character's experience. By pumping it into your experience, your character gains additional levels, which in turn make your weapons more destructive. The best thing about this feature is that it adds a slight tinge of RPG into an otherwise straightforward game.

Aesthetically EG is a masterpiece. Seamlessly fluid gameplay pace, combined with a premium music arrangement make the whole environment an experience to appreciate. The level design is great, each providing its own unique challenge. The look and feel of each level also meshed perfectly, as I felt like I was in a forest during the "Forest Stage" and in a church during the "Church Stage". As stated before, enemies are either polygonal or sprite-based. I didn't mind either way and I noticed slight pixelation during close-ups only. The soundtrack is one of the best I have heard in any game, on any platform. Debatable, it might not exactly "fit" with the action, but I found that it did in its own way. Each track started slowly, then built to an exciting middle, then came crashing down at the end of the level in an exciting crescendo. It takes some getting used to because it isn't what you would normally expect from a gun-game... however, after a few plays through, you will feel right at home as the blast away baddies while jamming to the tunes.



The lowdown: To get right down to it, Elemental Gearbolt is a very good game. Very good in the fact that it has all the elements of a great game, well presented, and strung together with



simplistic fluidity. The only thing EG lacks is long-term gameplay. The game is too simple, and the lack of levels weighed heavily on my decision. In my "humble" opinion, I think Elemental Gearbolt makes a superb rental, but only a hardcore shooting-game fan (or Working Designs fan) will find enough pleasure to actually purchase it.

Ben

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE

### COMPATIBILITY



To get right down to it, Elemental Gearbolt is a very good game. Very good in the fact that it has all the elements of a great game, well presented, and strung together with simplistic fluidity. The only thing EG lacks is long-term gameplay. The game is too simple, and the lack of levels weighed heavily on my decision. In my "humble" opinion, I think Elemental Gearbolt makes a superb rental, but only a hardcore shooting-game fan (or Working Designs fan) will find enough pleasure to actually purchase it.

# 85%



# TURBO PROP RACING

PUBLISHED BY SONY — DEVELOPED BY SONY EUROPE



I originally saw this title about a year ago at last E3. Back then, it was going by the name of Rapid Racer, and I remember accidentally stumbling across it at Sony's enormous booth. With the quick glance that I was able to give it, I came away thoroughly impressed, especially at the technology it was displaying. A year ago, 60 frames per second wasn't something you normally experienced on the PlayStation. In fact, the first game I can recall that ran at such blistering rates was Square Soft's Total No. 1. While there are quite a few games now available that run at this speed, Turbo Prop Racing does it the best.

Originally developed and released in the UK last year, Turbo Prop has undergone some tweaking and localization for its American release. At its core, the game is a straight-forward racing game that just happens to be on a variety of fictitious waterways throughout the world. Like Interplay's Powerboat Racing, you hop into a number of high-speed watercraft and race it out with a multitude of competitors for the coveted first place trophy. Unlike Powerboat Racing, Turbo Prop has the muscle and graphic presentation that lifts it way above Interplay's less-than-stellar effort. You start out the game with only three boats out of ten that are eventually available to you; each, of course, comes with its prerequisite strengths and weaknesses. The cool thing is — besides uncovering the other boats as you progress through the game — you have the ability to upgrade your stan-

dard craft by first collecting five yellow icons that are variously strewn throughout the "track," and then completing a special bonus round in an allotted amount of time (more on that later). There are two different modes of play when starting out: Time Trial — where you can, at first, attempt to beat the computer's best lap time then, once that's done, race against a ghost version of yourself. The other mode is One Race — where you choose one of three available tracks and race against a full grid of 15 competitors. Beat the first three and another three open up. Finish those off and you then open TPR's third mode of play — Championship Mode. There are three different versions of Championship Mode: Daytime, Night and Mirror, which are self-explanatory. If you add up all of the different variations with the tracks there are a total of 18. Not bad. I especially liked the night versions.

In addition to your boat's generic strengths



# ESRB RATED



and weaknesses, there are a variety of colored icons floating around the tracks that can either help you or hurt you depending on which one you pick up. The Green icon will give you a much-needed turbo boost. These are like gold but can also make things tough on you if you use them at the wrong moment. It's best to save them for straightaways. The Blue icon will stop the clock for five seconds. TPR is checkpoint-based and the clock is continually counting down. If you don't reach a checkpoint in time, it's game over. Although, I found that time was rarely a factor, even with the slowest boat. The Yellow icon is used to upgrade your craft. If you collect five in one race, you will have the option to race a bonus track, where it's you against the clock in an effort to collect a certain number of icons needed to get an upgrade. Lastly, there's the dreaded Red icon. This icon will cancel out a turbo boost or, what's worse, three of them will completely stop your boat for five seconds. You might think to yourself, "why not just avoid the red ones?" Believe me, it's not that easy when you're barreling down an undulating waterway filled with unpredictable currents at high speeds. The control is probably the game's only flaw that I could find. Although, it certainly isn't impossible to control and maneuver

your watercraft, there is a steep learning curve involved. It will take more than a few practice races to understand the steering mechanics involved in order to succeed. Even though it works with the Analog sticks on the Dual Shock, I found that the standard old D-pad worked the best. Speaking of Dual Shock, this game's got it in spades. The thing vibrates like crazy all throughout each race and is really a cool effect. Go out and get one if you haven't yet.

The look and feel of the game reminds me of something you would see at the arcade. In fact, I think this would be just a bitchin' coin-op if it was hooked up to hydraulics. The graphics are in beautiful high-res and, like I mentioned earlier, the frame rate cooks at a constant 60 fps. The water effects are truly amazing and each track is a marvel to behold. The music is



undeniably techno-inspired and is more than a little reminiscent of Ridge Racer—which isn't a bad thing in my book. Basically, TPR is a great game. It is a visual feast that will impress even the most jaded game players, and a blast to play—once you get over the initial frustration with the control. This is a definite recommendation, especially if you're into arcade-style racing games.

Greg

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE

### COMPATIBILITY



Basically, TPR is a great game. It is a visual feast that will impress even the most jaded game players, and a blast to play—once you get over the initial frustration with the control. This is a definite recommendation, especially if you're into arcade-style racing games.

89%



# MORTAL KOMBAT 4

PUBLISHED BY MIDWAY — DEVELOPED BY EUROCOM



Let's get to it. First of all, MK4 is played via 8-button layout. It has high and low punch buttons, high and low kick buttons, a block button, run button and two sidestep buttons. The object of the game is to manipulate the controls in such a manner, that you perform some kick-ass maneuvers, therefore destroying your opponent. If you manage to beat down your opponent, you get an opportunity to inflict some serious death with a "fatality", which kills your opponent in a convincing manner. Immediately available to choose from are 15 different characters, each with their own move sets, and fatalities with which to trounce your opponent. In addition to the basic arcade mode, MK4 is loaded with alternate options such as: 2-ON-2 Komat, which is like Arcade mode, except each player picks 2 komatants, Endurance, where you see how many wins you can rack up against computer controlled opponents; VS Endurance, where two players go at it having to play each character; Team, where you can pit your resizable team of komatants against a human or computer team; Tournament, classic 4/8 player battle where you get to go head to head with a bunch of human or CPU opponents; and finally, Practice! Practice mode is arguably the most enjoyable gameplay aspect of MK4. It's great for boning up on your favorite combos, or for making up some new ones.

The characters selectable in MK4 are typical of what one would normally sus-



pect from an MK game. There are a couple ninjas, some American heroes, a few really evil and sick, and of course... the high gods of all realms. All the characters have a very similar array of "normals" or "basic moves", and each character has some form of projectile. Each character has some preset "link" combinations which can launch your opponent into the air and leave you with a combo opportunity. Fortunately for a beginner, the "link" to juggle maneuvers is the same which makes it very helpful for someone that wants to learn a new character quickly. Each of the character's individual fatalities is uniquely graphic in their own way, with only a few sharing obvious graphic swaps. As with every MK game, if not every fighting game, certain characters have an incredible advantage over their rivals because of their highly useful array of special moves. This makes certain characters very popular because of their highly damaging combos and ease of use, while other character end up collecting dust. Then again, since balance has never been a factor in the MK series, old-school veterans most likely won't have a problem, and newbies won't even recognize it.

A new feature added to MK4 arcade, and now available for home play, is weapon fighting. Each character has the option to pull out a weapon and use it to his/her advantage. Not only can you use different strikes and attacks with each special weapon, you can hurl them at your opponent when it doesn't seem to be helping



# ERATED

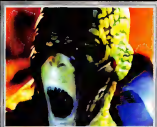




out. Also, on certain stages, there are rocks lying about for your throwing pleasure. An unguarded rock attack can cause some mean damage and they are especially good for pressure attacks. Also returning to MK play is the ever-popular Kombat Kode system. After selecting your character for a human/human match, and before the round starts, you can input codes on the VS screen which can alter gameplay. Some of the codes simply change the background to a preferred stage, but others actually make weapons rain from the sky, turn off the "Maximum Damage" combo limit, and one even gives both characters an unlimited run meter.

The graphics in MK4 are decent. They aren't as crisp as the N64 conversion, and the pixelation is very obvious. Character animation is so-so, but that's about how it is in the arcade. After beating the game, you are treated to a CG rendered version of the arcade ending. True, it looks a tad better than the arcade... but I expected much more from a home conversion.

The music is dark, gothic, eerie... basically everything you could ask for in a setting such as MK4. The sound effects were also better than I had initially expected. Solid hits connecting sound impressively harmful, and for the most part,



special move effects fit with each of their on-screen counterparts. Altogether the audio in MK4 is definitely one of its best features.

The Lowdown: For diehard fighting game purists, MK4 is nothing more than



a very good conversion of an average. It features the same gameplay that we have seen in the 1000 or so other versions of MK (yes I'm exaggerating... there were only 487 different incarnations of MK) and nothing has significantly changed the way the game is played. Frankly speaking, MK4 is an aging dog with only a couple of cool new tricks.

Ben

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE

### COMPATIBILITY



PlayStation 2

PlayStation 2

PlayStation 2

The Lowdown: For diehard fighting game purists, MK4 is nothing more than a very good conversion of a very bad fighting game. It features the same marionette gameplay that we have seen in the 1000 or so other versions of MK (yes I'm exaggerating... there were only 487 different incarnations of MK) and nothing has significantly changed the way the game is played. Frankly speaking, MK4 is an aging dog with a couple new tricks... none which help bring this game over the "bizarre" hump.

82%



# ADIDAS POWER SOCCER '98

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY PSYGNOSIS

Adidas Power Soccer by Psygnosis is an obvious attempt to take advantage of this year's World Cup in France. This is not the only attempt this year, but hopefully it's the last, because I have played WAAAY too much soccer in the past couple of months. In a competitive area like soccer during a World Cup year, there are a lot of games to go against. With games like Road to World Cup, World Cup '98, and International Superstar Soccer, Psygnosis has their work cut out for them.

Psygnosis does have some good ideas built into APS. There are over 400 different teams — this is more than both World Cup 98 and Road to World Cup (both of which scored "Gold" in our reviews). There are also some decent ball fakes, a 10,000 player database, 34 different stadiums, and yada yada yada.... What's that you say? This game must be great if it has all of these things going for it? Let me add the best option of all — you can have the play-by-play in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian or Dutch.

When I turned the game on, I had to wait about 5 minutes for the menu screen to pop up so I could play a game. This does not even include the movie short that you can watch if you don't push the start button. The only reason that you have to wait so long to play the game is that Adidas has to get their money's worth for putting their name on such



a wonderful piece of work like this game. Can anyone feel the sarcasm here?

Graphically, there is no comparison to the aforementioned titles. Compared to the two titles from EA Sports (RTWC and WC 98), Adidas Power Soccer looks like a first generation title. The players seem a bit blurry compared to all of the other titles out there. It's kind of like all the players are of the same origin as the FOX Hockey puck that has the laser in it. Only the players aren't really going that fast. The looks of the game aren't too bad, except for the blurry people. The stadiums look pretty good, but the important thing to remember here is that while playing the game, you are paying attention to the players and not the stadiums. The best thing about this game graphically is probably all of the commercials that Adidas has in it. I really don't think that you'll believe me about how many there really are. Suffice it to say, I can



# GRADED





barely count that high!

The sound in APS isn't bad. There is some up-tempo music and the sounds of blasting a shot toward the goal are pretty realistic. However, once again... no comparison.

The gameplay is where I could go on and on and on and on. Get the picture? First of all, the controls are not what I am used to, but this just takes a little time with them. Once you get used to 'em, it isn't really that bad. But what really ticked me off was the switching players thing. I was actually on a break away toward the goal, and I had nobody to beat except the goalkeeper. All of a sudden, the computer switched me to another guy and the man I was controlling just stopped and the ball rolled right into the goalie's hands. AAARRRRGGGHHH! Does anyone know how irritating this is? If not, rent this game and you'll soon find out. On to some of the better things. In APS, your speed burst can be constant if you want it to be. In the other titles, WC 98 and RWC, you have to keep tapping the Triangle Button to sprint. In APS, all you have to do is hold down the button, which I believe is the R1 for those of you scoring at home.

Overall, this game is just lacking a



lot of things. Graphically, the game needs to be cleaned up, the control needs to be tighter, and the commercials have got to go! Now, I understand that Adidas has their name on the box and they should be able to advertise, but I'd say that there



are at least ten minutes worth of commercials in this game. That might not seem like a lot of time but, if you have played this game, ten minutes is an eternity. Some of you might be soccer fanatics enough to want to check it out, but I don't know why. Anyway, to rate this game, soccer-style, Adidas Power Soccer gets a Red Card. Pooooouuuuu!!!!

Scott

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE

### COMPATIBILITY

- 1st Player
- Multi to Match 1-4 Players
- Analog Controller Compatible

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68%



# ISS SOCCER PRO '98

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY KONAMI



International Superstar Soccer 98 from Konami is the first of the series for the PlayStation. The N64 released ISS 64 last year and N64 ISS 98 is coming soon. Since the game has been done for another system already, you should expect a good, if not great, version for the PlayStation. And why not? Konami has made some great games in the past, so why should they make a dud now?

Once again, a video game publisher is taking advantage of the World Cup this year. It is not the first title ever to do so and it will not be the last, I'm sure. If you read last month's issue, you know that I reviewed EA's World Cup 98 and gave it a 93%. It will be hard to compete with that title, not to mention EA's other soccer title that was released just a couple short months before WC 98 (Road to World Cup, which received a 94%). These two titles were at the top of the video game soccer ranks when they came out, and they will remain at the top for quite a while longer.

International Superstar Soccer has really CLEAR graphics, unlike another game I reviewed (see Adidas Power Soccer). The players are very comparable to those in both EA titles — you can even see the textured faces on the players. The stadiums are fully rendered and are really amazing. All the way up to the movement and animations of the players, the graphics hold



strong.

The sound effects are pretty decent. Kicking the ball really hard sounds like the television sound effect for shooting a gun with a silencer on it but, other than that, the sound was really good. One unique option that you might like, even though I did not, is that you can choose different languages for the play-by-play. I put on the Spanish play-by-play and I felt like I was watching Telemundo (Yes!). It can add realistic flavor to the game and give you some atmosphere, but I really like knowing what the announcers are saying.

What I really enjoyed about ISS is that, while sprinting down the field, you don't just stop on a dime and make a cut. You actually have to take your finger off of the sprint button so that you slow down enough to make a sharp move. If you try to make a sharp cut while sprinting, your man just makes



# REVIEWED



really wide turns. This is a very realistic aspect and adds a certain "authenticity" to a good soccer game. The movement of the players is most excellent. There are dozens of great moves, passes and shots. The only thing wrong is that most of these are done by the computer. Even on the easiest setting, it is almost impossible to keep the ball.

You can dribble for days but, unless you slow down right away to dodge a defender, he WILL take it from you. And he takes it away from you quite easily. On the defensive end, the only player that seems to play defense is the one that you control. This was a little irritating to me. You can't cover an entire soccer team with just one guy. If you are chasing an opposing player that has the ball and you switch to another man, the original guy stops dead in his tracks and you are now the man closest to the ball. This

is not necessarily awful, but a little help from my teammates would be nice. The other thing that I did not like about this game was that my goalkeeper (normally pretty good in real life soccer) stunk up the field when he should have stopped the ball. He made some incredible stops, but didn't make some routine ones.

There are a lot of different possibilities in ISS. You can play an exhibition match, penalty shootout, or an international cup. You could play for the English Cup, World Cup, European Cup, etc. Once in the World Cup mode, you have the option of playing in the same groups as the real World Cup in France or you can customize your group. I loved putting my beloved Norway in a weak group with South Africa, Tunisia, and Japan. Not to bag on these countries, but let's face it, these teams don't create a lot of fear in their opponents! A great option, for sure, and one that should be in every soccer title!

All in all, International Superstar Soccer is a pretty decent game — the all-around package is worth spending your time playing. Certainly, there are



a few things that could use some polishing, but nothing that makes you think they should have scrapped the entire project. In the battle for the best soccer game, the nod still goes to Road to the World Cup and World Cup 98, although ISS 98 is head and shoulders above some of the other stuff out there! A solid first effort from Konami.

Scott

**PS**

THE BOTTOM LINE

**COMPATIBILITY**



All in all, International Superstar Soccer is a pretty decent game — the all-around package is worth spending your time playing. Certainly, there are a few things that could use some polishing, but nothing that makes you think they should have scrapped the entire project. In the battle for the best soccer game, the nod still goes to Road to the World Cup and World Cup 98, although ISS 98 is head and shoulders above some of the other stuff out there! A solid first effort from Konami.

**86%**



# GRAND THEFT AUTO

PUBLISHED BY TAKE 2 — DEVELOPED BY DMA DESIGNS



Unless you've been hiding under a virtual rock for the last year, you've probably heard at least something about Grand Theft Auto. It is the wonderful game that requires you to murder, steal, rob, pillage, plunder, blow stuff up, and generally cause havoc all in the name of good fun. The kids love it, the parents hate it, and now it is coming to the Playstation courtesy of Take 2 Interactive.

The inherent beauty of Grand Theft Auto is the utter simplicity of the core game. There are no fancy 3D graphics, no FMV, and really not too much in the way of eye candy. In fact, at first glance, the game doesn't look like much at all — then you actually start playing.

The game starts off with a basic premise. You are a gangster wannabe with nothing but a pager, a cell phone, and an uncanny ability to jack (steal) cars from unsuspecting civilians. Your sole purpose in life is to eventually amass a great fortune through the gangsta life. Jobs are handed down by a mysterious employer that will only call a pay phone. Every time a mission is completed you get a cut of the take (cold hard cash).

Although Grand Theft Auto contains specific missions, the game is not necessarily mission based. Level win conditions are based on obtaining a certain amount of cash, not by completing the missions in any particular order (or even completing them at all). In fact, it is completely possible to complete a level by



running around stealing cars all day. It just isn't as much fun.

The main character is controlled via RC-style controls from a top down view. This can present some difficulty at times when walking around on foot as the small sprite size makes it difficult to distinguish exactly which way your character is facing. Once in a car however, the usefulness of the control scheme becomes quite apparent and I found myself reliving the days of RC Pro Am on the classic NES. Skillful use of the brake will allow even the worst car in the game to outmaneuver the boys in blue. Incidentally, if you manage to take out an officer, go ahead and steal his car. Police cruisers are the best vehicles in the game (unlike real life) and are great for quick travel around the large cities in Grand Theft Auto.

Each of the three cities is approximately 2,000 square miles in size and



**GRADED**



contains 20 different vehicles with individual characteristics. They may not be as authentic as the cars in *Gran Turismo* and the names have definitely been changed, but they are all easily recognizable. I must have spent at least half an hour running around trying out the different vehicles, in order to determine which one was best for running over pedestrians en masse.

For the most part, *Grand Theft Auto* is a lot of fun, unfortunately there are a few nagging issues that keep it at the level of an average game. One of the most annoying things about the game is the complete lack of analog support. Would it really have been that hard to implement, especially considering the fact that *Grand Theft Auto* is a conversion of a PC title?

Another annoying problem has to do with the control scheme. *GTA* will only allow you to use a preprogrammed controller setup. You are allowed to choose from a few variations, but you cannot enter a custom setup. I have to ask, WHY NOT? Not everyone out there is going to agree with the default controller layout.

If the controller issues were the only problems with *Grand Theft Auto* they could probably be overlooked. My biggest beef with *GTA* isn't with what's wrong, it is with what's missing. After playing the PC version of *Grand Theft Auto*, I was expecting a near perfect conversion on the Playstation — not quite. Like any other PC to console conversion, it just isn't the same.

Both the PC and Playstation versions of *Grand Theft Auto* are rated MA17 and over, because of the content and themes in the game. This would lead one to think that they would be identical in content. While the Playstation version does con-

tain some "improper" language, the more risque bits seem to be missing. It is a shame because, while the game can still be played, some of the humor is lost.

Other bits of the game that have been lost in the translation include multiplayer games and a cut in the number of player characters. While the Playstation couldn't hope to compete with a networked game on the PC, a two player split-screen option should have been available. As much fun as it is to do battle with the cops, it is plenty more fun to try and take out a friend. The drop in characters is unexplainable. Although choice of character really doesn't mean much, it is interesting that only four characters are available in the Playstation *Grand Theft Auto* — and they are all



male. The female characters have been completely removed.

In the end, *Grand Theft Auto* is a nice diversion that should keep most players happy. If you have a PC though, you really should pass on the Playstation version and pick it up for the computer. Once you've seen *Grand Theft Auto* on the PC, it is hard to go back to the Playstation.

Adam

# PS

## THE BOTTOM LINE

### COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

In the end, *Grand Theft Auto* is a nice diversion that should keep most players happy. If you have a PC though, you really should pass on the Playstation version and pick it up for the computer. Once you've seen *Grand Theft Auto* on the PC it is hard to go back to the Playstation.

# 82%



# SUPER CROSS 98

PUBLISHED BY ACCLAIM — DEVELOPED BY PROBE



Before we get started with my review of Acclaim's *Jeremy McGrath Super Cross 98* (We'll refer to it as *JMSC* — please tell me that they're not already planning a '99!), I have an interesting little story to tell. Back when Atari was attempting to duke it out with 3DO for the coveted title of "Best Selling, Prematurely Launched, Next Generation Hardware Under \$700", my wife, Jeanna, was Atari's Director of Marketing. She wanted to do a deal to get Jeremy McGrath to endorse their new Super Cross game (eventually titled "Super Cross 3D"). The bottom line was that the Jaguar was already going in the tank and Atari had precious few marketing dollars available for licensing. So, Jeremy would have to wait to get his muddy mug slapped all over video game packaging. Well, he has finally made it. The funny thing is, he has made it on a game that suffers from all of the same problems that plagued the Atari game: a horribly slow frame rate that affects control and gameplay, last-generation technology and absolutely no gameplay or graphic innovation.

In fact, my first reaction upon opening the released version of the game (Acclaim did not make a beta/reviewable version of the game available to the video game press) was that the game must have been done by the guys that coded Playmates' "VMX Racing" — they look very similar and have the same frame rate problems. Of course, VMX Racing was essentially finished two years ago. Jeremy's game has the



unfortunate distinction of being sandwiched in-between technology generations — no texture smoothing, no 60 frames per second, no high resolution mode, no Dual Shock support — nada. Which is surprising, because Probe developed the game (*Forsaken*, *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Alien Trilogy*) and they are usually on the bleeding edge.

*JMSC* does not, however, suffer from a lack of options. The game features both indoor and outdoor tracks (three different tracks initially, with more becoming available once you win in the first set of races), split-screen multi-player racing, single race, season play and ghost racing (race against your own best time/bike), 24 different competitors, a number of different bikes, variable weather conditions, shortcuts on some of the tracks, and, a Playstation first, a track editor. The track editor is a fairly simple one, requiring only one block of the memory card to save the created track. In the role of course designer, you only have to work out the plan of the track, the terrain and track-side objects are automatically placed for you.

Sadly, options do not make a game and the average graphics and poor frame rate kill *JMSC* before it ever gets off the line. The frame rate problem is most evident in attempting to control the bike. You will find yourself hitting turbo on the straights, shooting into a turn, only to find the game bogging down on you, forcing you to over steer in the turn and you end up hitting the wall, a tree, etc. on the other side of the track. The other thing you will notice right

# RATED





away is that there is no sense of speed in the game. When you hit turbo (highly recommended — you'll want to lean on it most of the time), you are treated to a barely perceptible change in frame rate — the game relying on an animation swap in your on-screen character to help present an illusion of speed. As I played JMSO, I noticed that I was reacting physically to the game — in as much as I was pushing my controller forward toward the screen — as if this would somehow get my 20 cc tortoise to move a little faster. Ah, but that's not all... It seems that the game also has questionable collision detection. There are times in a race where you'll hit turbo and ram right into a guy in front of you, causing you both to take a spill... fine, no problem. But, there are other times when you can hit turbo and gun the guy in front of you down — with absolutely no penalty to you! While this may sound great when you are the guy dealing the grief — it is extremely frustrating when you're leading the pack and one of the other dudes does it to you.

Graphically, the game is second generation, at best, with low quality textures, limited sight lines and poorly animated riders. The tracks themselves, while colorful are fairly flat and lack any real depth of field (with one or two exceptions). when



coupled with the low resolution presentation and poor frame rate, JMSO simply doesn't measure up to the technology found in many other PlayStation racing games.

So, where does all of this leave Jeremy McGrath Super Cross 98? Well, to refer back



to the beginning of this review: in a position where they've got a lot of work to do in '99. If the only game that we had to compare JMSO to was VMX, then things wouldn't look so bad. But, EA/Delphine shipped a little jewel called "Moto Racer GP" last year — to rave reviews (98%/Platinum) that is faster, looks better and plays better — leaving JMSO in the position of also-ran.

Dave

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME

### COMPATIBILITY



So, where does all of this leave Jeremy McGrath Super Cross 98? Well, to refer back to the beginning of this review: in a position where they've got a lot of work to do in '99. If the only game that we had to compare JMSO to was VMX, then things wouldn't look so bad. But, EA/Delphine shipped a little jewel called "Moto Racer GP" last year — to rave reviews (98%/Platinum) that is faster, looks better and plays better — leaving JMSO in the position of also-ran.





# SENTINEL RETURNS

PUBLISHED BY PSYGNOSIS AND DEVELOPED BY NO-NAME GAMES & HOOKSTONE

It's very hard to describe the flow of the gameplay in *Sentinel Returns*, much in the same way that a description of *Tetris* wouldn't make any sense to someone who had never seen the game. The object of *Sentinel Returns* is to make your way across a three dimensional field to destroy the Sentinel, an ominous robotic presence high above you. The Sentinel stands atop a rocky outcropping high above your starting position, and can only be reached by building boulders and robots that help you slowly make your way up to the same elevation.

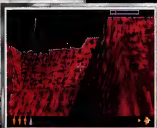
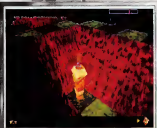
By absorbing the tentacle-like "trees" that litter the level, you increase your energy supply, which allows you to build. At the bottom of the screen, you're shown how much energy you have via icons representing the number of boulders, trees and robots you can create. You can only place an object on or below the level that you're currently occupying (so you can't cheat and toss a robot on a high peak in one move), but you can build up by dropping boulders on top of each other. When you have your pylon at the perfect height, drop a robot on top of it, then hit the transfer key, and you're consciousness will instantly shift to the new robot. You'll now be looking out at your last position, which is handy for quickly re-absorbing the old objects. Reach the Sentinel in this manner; absorb it, and warp out of the level. It's really that easy.

Here's the tricky part: the Sentinel doesn't like you much, and wants to absorb all your energy and, ultimately, your life.

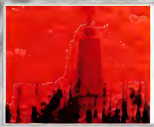
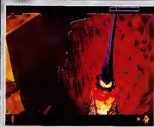


The Sentinel slowly turns its gaze across the playing field, sweeping its energy-sucking beam in a total 360. If you happen to fall under the Sentinel's scrutiny, it will begin absorbing the boulders and robots that support you, then slurp up your life. In the beginning stages of the game, the Sentinel's view moves slowly, as does its ability to drain you. In the first dozen or so levels, you actually have enough time to build another robot in a safer area, transfer to it, and re-absorb the items you were just standing on before being destroyed.

Later on, the Sentinel will be moving much faster, and you'll have to rely on your hyperspace maneuver, which takes up a good dose of your energy and dumps you in a random location in the map. This move can wind up putting you in a situation even worse than the one you had just been. It's possible to be teleported to a lower area that has no trees; no trees equals no energy, which means you're not going anywhere,



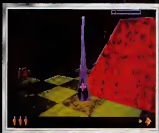
# RAIDED



mister. When the Sentinel drains your energy, it creates new trees in random locations on the map, so there is the possibility that you'll be able to regain your pilfered power.

Want to hear something really crazy? There are over 660 levels in Sentinel Returns. That's a lot of building and sucking—I guarantee that it will take you some time to finish this game. For sanity's sake, you don't have to progress through the game one level at a time. The more energy you grab from the field, the more levels you're able to skip once you beat the Sentinel and warp out. Picking up 90-100% of the trees lets you advance four levels. 70-89% moves you three, 50-69% boosts you by two, and anything lower will simply get you to the next level and will ultimately drive you crazy. Still, even if you manage to hit 90% on each and every level, you're going to have to play through close to two hundred rounds before you reach the end. And believe me, no matter how hard you try, there are just some levels you're going to screw up.

While I found the accelerated PC Sentinel Returns to be a fun, addictive game (check out PS Extreme sister publication Voodoo Magazine if you're a crossover PC gamer), the PlayStation rendition definitely leaves something to be desired. The PSX controller just does not work for this type of game, where you really need the freedom of a mouse to help you navigate through the 3D environment. Because you have to turn with the d-pad (analog stick support would have made this a much more enjoyable experience), viewing the full area is a slow and arduous process, even with the help of the speedy L2 button. Secondly, the graphics are hurtin'. Dark and grainy, the muddled colors of the Sentinel's world ooze onto your TV like a broken sewer pipe, and the low quality of the NTSC signal does nothing to help.



Sentinel Returns does pick up some special creepy bonus points for the theme music provided by director John Carpenter (Halloween, Escape from New York, The Thing), which sets a perfect atmosphere



for the game. While the gameplay does possess a certain compelling fever as you attempt to outmaneuver the Sentinel, it's simply too slow and unfriendly a game for the PlayStation crowd. Simple puzzle games do work on this system, but the lack of flash and glamour in Sentinel Returns just ain't gonna cut it with the majority of PSX owners out there.

Chris

## PS EXTREME

76%

### COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

Sentinel Returns does pick up some special creepy bonus points for the theme music provided by director John Carpenter (Halloween, Escape from New York, The Thing), which sets a perfect atmosphere for the game. While the gameplay does possess a certain compelling fever as you attempt to outmaneuver the Sentinel, it's simply too slow and unfriendly a game for the PlayStation crowd. Simple puzzle games do work on this system, but the lack of flash and glamour in Sentinel Returns just ain't gonna cut it with the majority of PSX owners out there.



# KARTIA

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY ATLUS



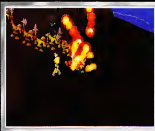
In the beginning of the PlayStation, we waited — “we” being the RPG Fanatics of the NES, SNES, and Genesis of course — and then we waited some more for 32bit RPG’s to arise. After a few years’ worth of “one here” and “another one there”, the Role Playing floodgates were finally smashed open. Among the many RPGs that have been and are being released this year, Atlus, who brought us one of the first PlayStation RPGs a few years back, “Persona”, has created a new RPG/Tactical game named Kartia for us. Kartia — by definition a card that creates all things — created a world called Rebus. In the beginning, as always with these things, the people of Rebus lived in peace. Moreover, living in peace for so long can, eventually, only bring one thing: corruption. The story, which is strongly driven in this game, is presented to you like a book, where you can choose between two different adventures basically for the same, simple outcome: to destroy evil and bring back peace to Rebus. You take on this valiant quest as either Toxa Classico, a free spirited knight, or the Shrine Warrior maiden Lycryma. This makes replay value good, especially if you get sucked into the story — you will definitely want to know what happens to each character.

You play out the game through chapters, and with each chapter you



get a thick dose of story and then head out to do battle. This is not like your typical RPG where you explore to find fights — the fights are already planned out for you. What I mean to say, in plain and simple terms, is it's very linear. The basic gist is to read some dialog, fight a major battle and, when you win, move on to the next chapter.

Like I stated earlier, as far as the battles are concerned, Rebus is a tactical game. If you're not familiar with the likes of Square's Final Fantasy Tactics or Konami's Vandal Hearts, then allow me to explain the difference between a standard RPG and the likes of these types of titles. It's similar to playing a game of chess... well, in a way. In Kartia, each battle is set up for you in the scenario of the story you previously read through. You have the characters that you were conversing with on your team against whatever bad guy that you encountered in the story. Before the battle, you have several options, such as making and equipping weapons and a cool feature which lets you create "Phantoms" to help you in your fight. After doing that, you are pitted in a battle, where most of the time you have the "first turn". Each character on the battlefield gets a turn to move in a pre-set area and then either to cast magic, attack, create or, if your character is unfortunate enough not to be in range, wait. After all of your characters have their chance to



# RAITEI



move and perform their tasks, the enemies get their chance to whack at you. This goes on and on until you either kill off all of the enemies or satisfy specific mission objectives (such as taking out the leader of the opposing forces), or your troops are dead or they strike down your main character. And, like any good RPG, your characters will gain experience points and level-up as they fight.

During the battles, you use the environment around you to your advantage by altering or obstructing the enemies' path. For example, in one scenario I needed to move a character closer to the last enemy who was hopelessly across a river, so I used a freeze spell which froze said river and allowed my other character to cross it. You also have the ability to combine and create magic for more strength or range. You can also rotate the 3D maps to strategize your battle plans.

The thing that I really liked about Kartia was the addition of a Versus Mode. On a rainy day you can just grab a friend and fight them in five different scenarios. Each mission has a different number of characters and objectives you and your friend must achieve. My favorite is the good ol' Face-

to-Face, last man standing dealio.

All in all, the graphics were clean and pretty, and the artwork was great, though the style isn't the typical "anime" look most hard-core RPG players are familiar with. (If you are fans of Amano Yoshitaka and Cozi Okada, you know what I am talking about.) The game, however has the SD (super deformed) characters working for it.

Though I was seeing myself a bit annoyed with only following the storyline, not being able to run around and talk to and find things out on my own, having the game presented as a "book" made it work. Kartia can be tedious — I am not going to lie — get ready to do 30 minutes to an hour battles, easy. The AI on the enemies is programmed so you have to think out your



battles but, if you are the gamer that likes to read books or just digs a great storyline, I invite you to dive into Kartia. With a refreshing new look, decent graphics and long if maybe a little arduous gameplay with two different storylines, Kartia comes as a recommended choice. Summer is here folks, what else are you going to do?

Miaka

PS

THE BOTTOM LINE

EXTREME

87%

COMPATIBILITY

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th

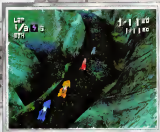
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# CIRCUIT BREAKERS

PUBLISHED BY MINDSCAPE — PURE ENTERTAINMENT



What makes a game good? Is it the story? Perhaps an intriguing plot to keep you involved. Is it the graphics? Maybe a crazy new look resembling nothing of times past. Or possibly it's just the fun-factor. Most gamers would agree that games don't have to look unbelievable or have a gripping story line to keep them coming back, just simply have inexplicably challenging, yet engaging, gameplay and you have a winner. As you read this paragraph and wonder: "where the hell is he going with this?" I question the judgement of Mindscape as they get set to release *Circuit Breakers* — a racing game about to be dropped into the every-growing genre of PSX racing games.

Most likely you can already tell where this is going. So I'll get right to it. *Circuit Breakers* (CB from now on) would best be categorized by comparing it to games such as *Micro Machines* or the more obscure *Dare Devil Derby*, in that it's a top-down, 3D racing game where you collect power-ups during races to boost your performance. Power-ups are humorous to say the least. They range from "turbo", to "shrink/grow" which are actually quite funny to witness in full effect. Although funny, most of the power-ups didn't seem to affect gameplay as much as I had expected. There are different sets of stages, each which follow a particular theme... such as "Jungle"



and "Egypt". Though I'll comment on the graphics package in a second, I will say that each level set followed the theme pretty well. After picking my vehicle from a pool of cars reminiscent of a batch of *Micro Machines*, off I went. The first problem with the actual gameplay of CB was the fact that I couldn't choose the camera angle. The camera seemed to be on rails and would switch between "close up" and "long shot" depending on where my vehicle was on the track. At first it was trivial but, after attempting some of the harder tracks, it became increasingly annoying as the camera whipped around me during a sharp turn, totally throwing off my turn radius. Add that to the fact that it's pretty tricky to control (at least with my Dual Shock), and I wondered why I was even playing *Circuit Breakers*. Anyway, after completing a race you are shown a ver-



# RAITED



centage which represents how much of the game you have completed. I would have actually preferred this to be left out, or at least not shown until further into the game.

Visually CB is dull. Each of the vehicles are boring — offering nothing in the way of detail or pizzazz. Actually, each one reminded me of those Pine Car Derby racers kids make in the Boy Scouts. Now, unless that was the intended effect, I think that should tell you what I think of the vehicle graphics. The backgrounds weren't much better, either. Very pixelly textures and boring environments made playing through each level a complete bore. In addition to the sub-par graphical presentation, the audio wasn't much better. Besides the mildly entertaining musical accompaniment, audio seemed to suffer the most. Each sound effect emitted a certain "generic" quality which was quite surprising given the PSX's audio capabilities. Option menu changes were signified with an engine rev sound that reminded me of an NES sound effect. The majority of the remainder of sound effects were dull and tedious, rounding out the entire audio/video package as horrible. I can only hope that some

changes are made before the final version goes out, as both the audio and video left a lasting impression on my final decision.

The lowdown: Said bluntly, Circuit Breakers is simply a very poor game.



Very generic graphics, combined with horrible sound effects and very boring gameplay make it unworthy of even a 2-day rental fee. With its best feature being the Dual Shock support, Circuit Breakers is a great idea executed poorly. With some major reworking, perhaps a sequel could be of more merit.

Ben

## PS THE BOTTOM LINE

### COMPATIBILITY

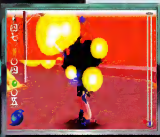
- 1-2 Players
- Analog Controller Compatible
- Play by Internet

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49%

TRY  
X





## SOUKAIGI

SQUARESOFT • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

A mixture of RPG and action, Squaresoft's Soukaigi is just what the doctor ordered. Imagine playing Soul Blade as a 3D action game, but take hordes of strange creatures, tough psychic bosses and hidden treasures and toss them all into the mix.

Soukaigi is played from a third person view, with the camera following behind and slightly above your character. The main object is to run around and hack things — anything, from monsters to trees to lightposts to trucks — as you move from level to level. As you run through the levels, you'll find huge floating gems (some of which are quite tricky to reach). Destroying the gems increases your power, making your weapon do more damage and changing the aspect of your attacks. You battle from

one end of the level to the other, with different objectives for each stage. Between levels, you're awarded points which you can use to pump up your characters' state, making them stronger or faster.

Strangely enough, this is one of the few new 3D action games we've seen from Japan lately that actually doesn't support the Dual Shock, which would have



# EXPORT





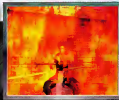
been a natural for navigating through the huge, open 3D environments. This game is heavier on the action side than the thoughtful RPG side;

don't expect lots of puzzles or personal interaction. The story unfolds through grainy FMV sequences (reminiscent of *Bushido Blade* and a bit of a disappointment after some of Square's more recent releases), a mixture of prerendered video and the in-game engine. Typical Japanese themes run throughout the game: psychic powers, martial arts and a team of young fighters saving the world. Because of the length of the game and the wealth of video clips, *Soukaigi* runs across three discs.

At press time, Square says that they have no plans to release *Soukaigi* here in the U.S., which would be a real shame.

This is a great mixture of several different genres — fighting / action / adventure / RPG — and makes a great break from the usual. Even though the plot and storyline completely escaped us (we really could use a Japanese speaking editor), the game was action packed and easy to grasp.

CHRIS



# The PS Extreme Historical Ranking Chart

EXCAVATE is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Resident Evil 2	March 1998	99%
Gas: Enter the Gecko	March 1998	99%
One	February 1998	98%
Gran Turismo	June 1998	96%

GOLD GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Tekken 3	May 1998	97%
Blade	May 1998	96%
Reboot	April 1998	96%
MLB 99	June 1998	96%
FIFA 98	February 1998	94%

NBA Shootout 98	April 1998	94%
Enhancer	May 1998	94%
World Cup 98	July 1998	93%
N2O Nitrous Oxide	July 1998	93%
Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit	May 1998	93%
Bloody Roar	March 1998	93%
Tomb Raider	May 1998	93%

Jersey Devil	July 1998	92%
Hot Shots Golf	April 1998	92%
VR Baseball 99	June 1998	92%
Cardinal Sins	June 1998	92%
The Granstream Saga	July 1998	92%
Forcecast	June 1998	91%
Broken Sword	February 1998	90%
Alundra	February 1998	90%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	February 1998	90%

SILVER GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Azure Dreams	July 1998	89%
Rosco McGoon	July 1998	89%
Breath of Fire 3	May 1998	89%
X-Men vs. Street Fighter EX Edition	May 1998	88%
Road Rash 3D	July 1998	88%

Dead or Alive	April 1998	87%
Saga Frontier	April 1998	87%
Rascal	March 1998	87%
WOW Nitro	February 1998	87%
Triple Play 99	April 1998	86%
Auto destruct	February 1998	86%
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	February 1998	86%
Diablo	May 1998	85%
Skull Monkeys	March 1998	85%
Monopoly	February 1998	85%
Vigilante 8	July 1998	84%
Kronos	March 1998	84%
NBA in the Zone '98	February 1998	83%
Newman/Haas Racing	March 1998	81%
VR Powerboat Racing	April 1998	81%
Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown	February 1998	80%

BRONZE GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Micro Machines V3	February 1998	79%
Dark Omen	June 1998	78%
Speed Racer	May 1998	78%
Pitfall 3D	June 1998	76%
Fox Sports Golf '99	July 1998	75%
Riven: The sequel to Myst	March 1998	75%
Ray Tracers	March 1998	75%
NCAA March Madness 98	April 1998	74%
Mega Man Legends	June 1998	72%
Fox Sports Soccer '99	July 1998	71%

TIN GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Boast Wars	March 1998	69%
X-MEN: Children of the Atom	April	69%
Judge Dredd	May 1998	68%
Be FREAKS	July 1998	66%

## WHAT DO ALL THOSE NUMBERS MEAN?

**98-100%**

The ultimate gaming experience



**90-97%**

"Must buy" games, each carries our editor's seal of approval



**80-89%**

Good games, but lacking in some area, for fans of that style of game



**70-79%**

Mechanic titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Buy — don't buy



**0-69%**

The games are to be avoided, at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these

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